In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

قال الله تعالى:

﴿إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذۡهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجۡسَ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡبَيۡتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمۡ تَطۡهِيرًا﴾

"Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification."
(*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* 33:33)

Prophetic traditions recorded in both Sunnī and Shīʿah most reliable books of traditions [*aḥādīth*] and exegesis of the Qur'ān [*tafsīr*] have confirmed that this part of the holy verse is exclusively referring to the People of the Mantle [*ahl al-kisā'*] who were the *Ahl al-Bayt* (ʿa) during the time of revelation of the verse.

For instance, refer to the following references:

Sunnī:

(1) Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *Al-Musnad*, 1:231; 4:107; 6:292, 304 (2) Muslim (d. 261 AH), *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 7:130 (3) Al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361, etc. (4) Al-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *Al-Dhurriyyah al-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108 (5) Al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 AH), *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā,* 5:108, 113 (6) Al-Ḥakīm al-Nayshābūrī (d. 405 AH), *Al-Mustadrak al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146-147 (7) Al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH), *Al-Burḥān*, p. 197 (8) Ibn Hājar al-Asqalānī (d. 852 AH), *Fatḥ al-Barī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

Shīʿah:

(1) Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, 1:287 (2) Ibn Bābawayh (d. 329 AH), *Al-Imāmah wa'l-Tabṣīrah*, p. 47, *ḥadīth* 29 (3) Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37 (4) Al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH), *Al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550 (5) Al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 AH), *Al-Amālī*, *aḥādīth* 438, 482, 783.

For further information, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse recorded in the following references: (1) Al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370 AH), *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (2) Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468 AH), *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* (3) Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Masīr* (4) Al-Qurṭubī (d. 671 AH), *Al-Jāmi' Li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (5) Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Tafsīr* (6) Al-Thaʿlabī, *Tafsīr* (7) Al-Ṭabarī (d. 875 AH), *Tafsīr* (8) Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH), *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* (9) Al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH), *Fatḥ al-Qadīr* (10) Al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Tafsīr* (11) Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Tafsīr* (12) Furāt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Tafsīr*, at the margin of the exegesis of Qur'ān 4:59 (13) Al-Ṭabarsī (d. 560 AH), *Majma' al-Bayān*, as well as many other reference books on *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr*.

RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD,
THE AGE OF NEED

قَالَ رَسُولُ الله ﷺ:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ: كِتَابَ الله وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَداً، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:
"Verily, I am leaving among you two weighty things [*thaqalayn*]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [*'itratī*], the members of my Household [Ahl al-Bayt]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [*ḥawḍ*] (of Kawthar)."

Some references:

- Al-Ḥākim al-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak 'alā'ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533
- Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, (English translation), book 31, *ḥadīth*s 5920-3
- Al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *ḥadīth*s 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219
- Al-Nasā'ī, *Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *ḥadīth* 79
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Al-Musnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190
- Ibn al-'Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277
- Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209
- Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm* , vol. 6, p. 199

Naṣīr ad-Dīn al-Albanī, *Silsilāt al-Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dār aṣ-Ṣalāfiyyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

Religion and the Modern World
the Age of Need

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CONTENTS

PREFACE—11
INTRODUCTION—13
1. WESTERN RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS' APPROACH—15
2. THE APPROACH OF MUSLIM RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS—19
2.1. The social need for law—19
Farabi's exposition—19
Avicenna's exposition—20
'Allameh Tabataba'i's exposition—22
Evaluation—23
2.2. Knowing God or Science, and proceeding on the path toward God.—26
Evaluation—27
2.3. Assignment of duties leads to human perfection—27
Evaluation—28
2.4. Recognition of the path toward perfection—28
Evaluation—30
2.5. Select exposition – granting insight and incentive toward perfection—31
Man, the multi-dimensional being—31
Capacity for perfection—31
Desire to achieve perfection—32
Seek to recognize the path toward perfection—32
Possess intellect and free choice—32
Possessor of contradictory passions—33
Man's epistemic and psychological shortcomings on the path to guidance—34
Theology—34
Conclusion—34
3. CLAIMING THE ADEQUACY OF SCIENCE AND THE INTELLECT—37
Evaluation—39
Shortcomings of science—40
The first shortcoming—40
The second shortcoming—42
The third shortcoming—43
Shortcomings of the intellect—44
The first shortcoming—44
The second shortcoming—46
The third shortcoming—48
Shortcomings shared by science and the intellect—49
The first shortcoming—49
The second shortcoming—49

The third shortcoming—53
The fourth shortcoming—53
The fifth shortcoming—55
The sixth shortcoming—57
The seventh shortcoming—57
The eighth shortcoming—59
The ninth shortcoming—60
The tenth shortcoming—61
Limitations of collective reason—62
4. PREVENTING CONTINGENT LOSSES IS ANOTHER ARGUMENT SUPPORTING THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION—67
5. DR. SOROUSH'S CLAIM: MODERN MAN DOES NOT NEED RELIGION—69
Exposition of the theory—69
Description or judgment—72
Arguments substantiating needlessness of religion.—73
Evaluation—75
Presenting a specific standard for needlessness.—78
Summary of the argument—80
Evaluation of the first premise—82
Evaluation of the second premise—82
The first problem—85
The second problem—86
The third problem—88
The fourth problem—89
Citation of the Qur'anic verses and traditions—90
Evaluation—91
Axiomatic teachings—93
Evaluation—94
Specific emphasis on Western countries' needlessness of religion—95
6. THE WEST AND THE DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES OF EXTREME SCIENTISM AND RATIONALISM—101
Nihilism, anxiety, and loneliness—101
Mental fatigue and the feeling of spiritual and moral emptiness—105
Metamorphosis of man into a machine—109
Increase in criminal acts—110
Inability to solve the complications of modern man—111
APPENDIX—115
1. The ever-increasing religious tendencies in the West—115
The general public in the West—115
The twenty-first century: the decline of secularism—126
Western scholars' ever-increasing religious tendencies—127
2. Scholars' religious tendencies at the beginning of the 20th century—127
3. The Deadlock of excessive scientism—130
4. Beginning of the collapse of sheer materialism and the increasing efforts to appreciate the reality of religion—134
5. Confessions of the 20th century standard-bearer of atheism to the existence

of God—136
Dissemination of Islam in the West—139
Acknowledging the flourishing of political Islam—139
The Holy Qur'an, the number one bestseller in the West—139
Recitation of the Qur'an at the sessions of the European Union—140
Huntington's theory—140
Confessions of an archbishop—141
Obligatory apologies for expressing offensive remarks against Islam—141
Recognition by academics and the social elite—142
Specific countries—143
The United States of America—143
American officers and privates in Iraq—145
An American female private at Imam Husayn's holy shrine—146
Latin America—146
Canada—147
England—148
Britain—149
Denmark—149
Germany—149
France—150
Sweden—151
Hindus—151
Renaissance in Muslim countries—151
Reasons for converting to Islam as stated by new converts—152
The impact of Imam Khomeini's character—152
Spread of moral evils, homosexuality, and domestic problems—152
The 9/11 catastrophe—153
Islam's deliberation, moderation and logicality—153
Islam's pacifism and promotion of justice—154
Creating physical and psychological comfort in individuals, and esprit and vitality in society—155
Religion for life and solution to all the problems—155
SUMMARY—157
BIBLIOGRAPHY—160

PREFACE

The invaluable legacy of the Household [*Ahl al-Bayt*] of the Prophet (may peace be upon them all), as preserved by their followers, is a comprehensive school of thought that embraces all branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has produced many brilliant scholars who have drawn inspiration from this rich and pure resource. It has provided the Muslim *ummah* with many scholars whom, following in the footsteps of Imams of the Prophet's Household (‘a), have done their best to clear up the doubts raised by various creeds and currents within and without Muslim society and to answer their questions. Throughout the past centuries, they have given well-reasoned answers and clarifications concerning these questions and doubts.

To meet the responsibilities assigned to it, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) has embarked on a defense of the sanctity of the Islamic message and its verities, often obscured by the partisans of various sects and creeds as well as by currents hostile to Islam. The Assembly follows in the footsteps of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) and the disciples of their school of thought in its readiness to confront these challenges and tries to be on the frontline in consonance with the demands of every age.

The arguments contained in the works of the scholars belonging to the School of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) are of unique significance. That is because they are based on genuine scholarship and appeal to reason, and avoid prejudice and bias. These arguments address scholars and thinkers in a manner that appeals to healthy minds and wholesome human nature.

To assist the seekers of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly has endeavored to present a new phase of these arguments contained in the studies and translations of the works of contemporary Shi‘ah writers and those who have embraced this sublime school of thought through divine blessing.

The Assembly is also engaged in editing and publishing valuable works by leading Shīʿah scholars of earlier ages to assist the seekers of the truth in discovering the truths which the School of the Prophet's Household (ʻa) has offered to the entire world.

The Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly looks forward to benefit from the opinions of the readers and their suggestions and constructive criticism in this area.

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the genuine Islamic teachings as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (ṣ).

We beseech God, the Most High, to accept our humble efforts and to enable us to enhance them under the auspices of Imam al-Mahdi, His vicegerent on the earth (may Allah expedite his advent).

We express our gratitude to Mr Abu 'l-Fazl Sajedi author of the present book, and Mr. Muhammad Mahdi Baqi, its translators. We also thank our colleagues who have participated in producing this work, especially the staff of the Translation Office.

Cultural Affairs Department
The Ahl al-Bayt (ʻa) World Assembly

INTRODUCTION

In the present day, our youths need to know the answers to many such questions concerning the correlation between religion and the modern life as the following:

- What is the status of religion in the modern world?
- Can religion be regarded as significant, despite recent scientific progress?
- Does the intellect necessitate believing in and practicing a religion?
- Does advancement in science, as well as transformation in the spheres of culture and civilization, prove the needlessness of religion?
- What are the arguments presented by their proponents?
- How have the Western elite and the general public reacted towards the recent religious tendencies and refutations, particularly those concerning Islam?

The present book aims at finding answers to such questions. For the same purpose, it proceeds with an exposition of the concept of "the necessity of religion" and its relationship with similar concepts. The Western and Muslim thinkers' approach in this regard and its distinctive features will then be explained. Then follows a detailed exposition of the viewpoint of Muslim thinkers concerning the necessity of turning to religion, and the appointment of prophets to their Divine missions. The main topics of this chapter include society's need for laws; recognizing and treading the path towards God; the value of duty; and, recognizing the path leading to perfection. An evaluation of viewpoints and an exposition of select views precedes the suggestion of challenging the adequacy of the intellect and science in our age, and finally, Dr. Soroush's claims concerning the *admirable needlessness of religion* and its evaluation will be presented. What follows includes the damaging consequences of excessive reliance

on science and the intellect in the West; the simultaneous global increase in religious tendencies, particularly, conversion to the Islamic faith in the West; an exposition of reasons for converting to Islam by the new converts. The last part includes the synopsis and message of this book.

The prevalent view among Western thinkers constitutes refutations of religious necessity by relying on science and the intellect, especially by some philosophers of materialism and extreme rationalism during the Renaissance and today. Consequently, a brief account of the Western thinkers' approach toward religious necessity will be presented, and a more detailed discussion will be devoted to examine the adequacy of science and the intellect.

Abu 'l-Fazl Sajedi

1. WESTERN RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS' APPROACH

Various arguments have been presented to prove the logical necessity of returning to religion and adhering to it. It is different from concepts such as the various aspects of "religious need" often used in Western books on religious studies as a mundane need and function rather than having otherworldly consequences. Even in this respect, what is meant at times, is merely an individual psychological need rather than the limitations of the human intellect (epistemic needs). But the necessity of religion denotes the necessity which arises from worldly and otherworldly needs, as well as its psychological, intellectual, individual, and social functions. This necessity is closely related to "the necessity of the prophetic Divine missions," since the most important argument mentioned as proof reveals a kind of shortcoming in human epistemic means. The same shortcoming necessitates turning to a more perfect means, and thus, the need for it. The need for Divine revelation is a prerequisite for such prophetic missions and so, the former precedes the latter. Since man needs Divine revelation, it is necessary that God appoint prophets to serve as a medium of imparting it to man.

It is necessary to pay attention to the practical distinction between the necessity of religion and the need for it, despite the conceptual proximity between the two. This is because, many a time, Western scholars discuss "religious need," by expounding it through sociological and psychological approaches and concentrate on its specific functions. This began because of the transformation that took place in the religious approach of Western thinkers during the preceding centuries. Formerly, they devoted most of their discussions to theology, proving God's existence, and the veracity of religious beliefs.[1] Today, religious studies

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1. For further information concerning the viewpoints of Western scholars in the field of religious studies regarding God, see H.P. Awn, *Didgah-ha dar bare-ye khoda* ["Viewpoints concerning God"], translated by Hamid Bakhshande.

have substituted theology, and attention is being paid to the functions of religion and its psychological effects. For instance, Hick's words are quoted in this regard: "There is a kind of transformation and substitution made in the term *God* as the key word in a series of terms concerning "religion", since they are related to the same linguistic family."[1]

Formerly, the existence of God, His attributes and the ends of His acts, were the topics of discussions and inquiries. "Nowadays, for instance, the same topics and questions are related to religion, its nature, forms and practical value."[2] In modern times, from an academic point of view, a discussion regarding God is presented as secondary in nature, an extended topic of religion. Other discussions concern the history of religion, its various forms, and its role in culture, assisting individuals to achieve internal accord and harmony and relate to the environment. The usual question regarding God is the non-existence of God. No question concerning the existence of religion is raised, since it is obvious that religion exists. The main questions concern the consequences of religion in man's life. Questions regarding religious truths have been marginalized and the center of attention is devoted to the practical advantage of such beliefs.[3]

Is seeking such substitutes for the concrete realities of religion natural in an age in which religion is on the decline?

Hick maintains that Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell were not satisfied with the utilitarian method employed to prove the existence of God. They emphasized that the importance lay in proving the veracity and fallacy of the truths as admitted by believers.[4] Such anti-religious trends, have been severely challenged in recent decades by deadlocks resulting from thoughts generated in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the trend of turning to religion has begun.

A number of issues, on the basis of which Western scholars justify turning to religion, concern individual and social functions. The former

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1. John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion,* p. 91.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* pp. 90-91.
4. *Ibid.* p. 92.

include: giving meaning to life; curing feelings of loneliness; admitting ethical, spiritual, and psychological emptiness; preventing man's metamorphosis into a machine; organizing an individual's life; and, solving existential dilemmas. The latter include: creating unity and solidarity; controlling and checking social adverse effects and criminal acts resulting from weak faith.[1] Western views concerning the functions of religion are presented in utilitarian terms, since most of the definitions presented in the field of religion are of this type.

1. For instance, see: Jean Paul Wilhelm, *Jame'e-shenasi-ye Adyan* ["Sociology of Religions"], p. 168; Din-pazhuhi ["Religious Studies"], vol. 1, p. 359; Nicholas Abercrombie, *Farhang-e Jame'e Shenasi* ["Dictionary of Sociology"], translated by Hasan puya, p. 320.

2. THE APPROACH OF MUSLIM RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS

Contrary to the Western scholars of religious studies, who emphasize the non-epistemic function of religion and turn to religion as a necessity, most Muslim thinkers base the necessity of religion on its epistemic function, complementing man's epistemic shortcomings. Even though, Muslim scholars focus their arguments on its epistemic aspect. A general definition of Divine religions share similar themes and regard religion as belief in God, and practical instructions proportionate to this belief.[1] On the same basis, Divinely inspired religion may be defined as a collection of statements regarding beings (including theology, anthropology, and cosmology, irrespective of this world and the world to come) and instructions leading to man's guidance and perfection. If religious teachings be true and conform to reality, religion will be regarded as true, and practicing them will enjoy adequate validity; otherwise, it will be untrue. Religious instructions result from either the intellect or Divine revelation, and they necessitate beliefs and specific physical and mental practices.

Religious scholars of Islamic studies discuss the necessity of the Divine appointment of prophets and their missions. Their arguments may be categorized as follows.

2.1. The social need for law

"The philosophers' proof" emphasizes man's social character, the social need for law, and man's incapability to legislate and enforce laws. The complete exposition of the proof is found in Avicenna's works, but chronologically, Farabi precedes him in dealing with the issue.

Farabi's exposition

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1. Muhammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, *Amuzesh-e 'Aqa'ed* ["teaching beliefs"], vol. 1, p. 28; Muhammad Hosayn Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan*, vol. 15, p. 8; 'Abd Allah Javadi, *Shari'at dar A'ine-ye Ma'refat* ["Religious law as reflected in the mirror of knowledge"], p. 157.

According to Farabi's (260-339/873-950) philosophical system, the creation of man requires a collective and social life, whereas man lacks adequate capabilities to legislate and enforce the laws required to establish and maintain the Utopian social order.[1] The legislation and enforcement of law can be achieved through various methods. For instance, social hierarchies and relationships in "the city of necessities" and "the city of veneration,"[2] are two models of social life, based on the thoughts of the citizens, but the establishment of Utopia can only result from the acceptance and application of Divine revelation. Farabi defines Utopia as: "the city in which the true objective of coexisting is to collaborate in the affairs which make the achievement and actualization of man's happiness possible."[3] Thus he describes the ruler of this city: "as a man regarded by the ancients as the king and ruler, and deserves to be the receiver of Divine revelation, since it is realized when [man possessing merit and endeavor] achieves such an exalted state. Attaining such a station becomes possible when there exists no intermediary between the passive and active intellect, and the passive intellect joins the active one. Then, the latter bestows this power to the former, through which man perceives truths and recognizes actions, and it becomes conducive towards the happiness and good fortune of all."[4]

Thus, God reveals truths to such a man through the active intellect. According to this viewpoint, Divine revelation is considered to be a kind of bestowal from the active intellect to the passive intellect.

Avicenna's exposition

In the theology section of his *Shifa'*, Avicenna (370-438/980-1074)

1. Abu Nasr Muhammad Farabi, *Andishe-ha-ye Ahl-e Madine-ye fadele* ["thoughts of the people of Utopia"], Dr. Sayyed Ja'far Sajjadi, p. 251-252.

2. According to Farabi, the inhabitants of the city of necessities (madine-ye zaruriyye) merely pursue meeting their material requirements, including clothes, residence, marriage and cooperation with an aim to achieve such facilities. The goal of the inhabitants of the city of veneration (madine-ye karamiyye) is to achieve recognition and veneration among other nations. (cf. Khvaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, *Akhlaq-e Naseri* ["Nasirean Ethics"], p. 245-247; *Faruq Sa'd, Ma'a 'l-Farabi wa 'l-Mudun al-Fadila* ["With Farabi and Utopias"], pp. 62-65).

3. *Ibid.* p. 255.

4. Abu Nasr Farabi, *Siyasat-e madaniyye* ["Statecraft"], translated and annotated by Hasan Malekshahi, p. 205.

presents a complete exposition of this argument, preceded by the following preliminary statements:

- Man is sociable and inclines toward coexistence.
- Man's civic characteristics distinguish him from animals.
- Individual life cannot manage all human affairs, nor adequately meet its needs.
- Optimal living conditions require the collaboration of groups of men, which can be fulfilled only through coexistence.
- Collaboration requires interaction, and interaction, in turn, needs law and administration of justice.
- This needs a justice-promoting law-maker.
- Since man loves himself (self-love), he strives to attain his demands and acquire further benefits.
- This does not work harmoniously in society and entails chaos. Therefore, unrestrained individual desires have to be controlled.
- Law and order must prevail so that the rights and duties of individuals may be specified.
- Such an individual is considered humane, and at the same time, enjoys the privilege of performing miracles, so that people may emulate him.
- The need of such a man for man's survival is greater than the eyebrows on ones face.
- It is impossible that Divine Providence demands such a social environment, but does not necessitate the existence of a man to meet it.
- The Creator of existence, the All-Competent, Wise Being, who has met all the needs of mankind in the system of creation is certainly aware of the necessity of such a superior legislator and justice-promoter, and provides one.
- As a result, the Divine appointment of prophets to their missions

is a necessity.[1]

Arguments of a similar nature may be found in the works of a number of Muslim philosophers, e.g. Shaykh Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (549-587),[2] Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi,[3] Fayd al-Kashani,[4] 'Allameh Tabataba'i. To save space and avoid repetition, it would suffice to mention 'Allameh Tabataba'i's view, which is more complete.

'Allameh Tabataba'i's exposition

'Allameh Tabataba'i further strengthened the philosophers' argument in a way that avoided all the earlier criticism. An outline of his viewpoint follows:

- The system of creation is such that it necessitates each and every being, including man, to receive guidance of the way towards its real perfection.
- Man loves himself, so he employs all potential resources available, which force him to form societies.
- Employment of all possible resources leads to social differences.
- The system of creation necessitates the elimination of such differences to enable man to attain perfection.
- Man's epistemic means per se may not enact appropriate laws for attaining material and spiritual happiness or dispelling differences.
- Man necessarily requires another source to discover and make laws.
- The other kind of awareness is only the Divine revelation specific

1. Ibn Sina, *Elahiyat-e Shifa'* [The Theology section of al-Shifa'], treatise 10, chapter 2, pp. 441-442. The summary of the discussion may also be found in *al-Isharat wa 'l-Tanbihat*, pp. 371-375 in a section of namat 9.

2. Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, *Majmu'a-ye Musanafat-e Shaykh-e Ishraq* ["Collection of the works of Shaykh-e Ishraq"], ed. Henri Corbin, vol. 1, pp. 95-96.

3. Mulla Sadra, *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyya*, ed. Sayyed Jalal al-Din Ashtiyani, pp. 359-360.

4. Al-Mulla Muhsin Kashani, *'Ilm al-Yaqin fi Usul al-Din*, vol. 1, pp. 448-449.

to prophets.

Conclusion: It is necessary that God sends down revelation to solve differences in human societies and pave the way for man's material and spiritual perfection.[1]

Evaluation

A number of Muslim scholars have criticized the philosophers' arguments. We will mention two of them and two critiques:

1. The first critique, which challenges the necessity of prophetic missions, is the possibility of the establishment of social order without recourse to religion. Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, in his commentary on Avicenna's *al-Isharat wa 'l-Tanbihat*, states: "In case the social system seeks to attain worldly and otherworldly benefits, it requires Divine revelation, but the establishment of social order and avoidance of chaos may also be attained through a kind of non-revelatory legislation. Therefore, despite Avicenna's viewpoint, men may establish organization in their societies without recourse to Divine revelation.[2]

Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (450-505/1058-1111) also regards Avicenna's exposition as a mundane interpretation of religion. He maintains that one of the causes of people's feeble beliefs regarding religion is the philosophers' interpretation, according to which, the grounds and results of the Divine prophetic missions are to protect people from engagement in clashes, conflicts, and indulgence in concupiscent passions.[3]

Ibn Khuldun (734-780/1333-1378) accepts this critique and substantiates it by referring to a number of instances of social life which, despite the lack of religion, are enjoying an organized control over society. Referring to his contemporaries, he states that the people of the Book and followers of prophets, are limited in number and merely constitute the minority, compared to the rest of the inhabitants of the world whose governments

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1. Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 2, pp. 130-150; Shi'a dar Islam [Shi'ism in Islam"], pp. 80-83.

2. Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa 'l-Tanbihat*, annotated by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, vol. 3, pp. 373-374.

3. Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, *Shakk va Shenakht* (al-Munqid min al-Dalal) ["Deliverance from Error"], translated [into Persian] by Sadeq A'ine-vand, pp. 56-57.

administer the affairs of the states. They enjoy social systems, which have created positive impressions. Therefore, establishment of society and removal of clashes between its members is not only attainable through the Divine prophetic missions.[1]

The last question can be answered thus: pieces of evidence can be found in the philosophers' argument which indicate the necessity of Divine revelation for certain requirements beyond mundane affairs. For instance, in discussing the necessity of prophetic missions, Avicenna emphasizes mundane elements and social life based on justice. However, his remarks in the *Ilahiyyat al-Shifa'*, section 10, chapter 1, and many statements concerning intellectual happiness and pleasure, denote that prophets had two objectives: firstly, guiding people toward spiritual happiness through believing in God, the Day of Judgment, and virtues; and secondly, guiding them towards legislating just laws and religion. Both are necessary to achieve the two forms of happiness.

Besides social order, Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi considers the need for Divine revelation as the guiding principle for mankind toward paradise in both worlds. According to him, "God does not even neglect causing the growth of eyebrows, how could He deprive His servants of a mercy bestowed upon creatures, indicated by prophets, who also serve as men's guides toward paradise in both worlds?"[2] He also considers religious law as a means of indicating the path toward God, and considers the affairs reminding men of the world to come as obligatory.[3]

In his exposition, Allameh Tabataba'i emphasizes the necessity of guiding man towards his own perfection, which lies beyond mundane happiness. Besides, in many of his works, he emphasizes a comprehensive outlook regarding Divine revelation and states: "in legislating religious law, not only has man's perfection been considered, but man's true existence. The objective of religion is man's material, spiritual, worldly and otherworldly perfection. Religion aims at improving society, and educating individuals at the physical and

1. Ibn Khaldun, *Muqadimma*, pp. 43-44.

2. Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyya*, pp. 359-360.

3. *Ibid.*

intellectual level."[1]

If philosophers try to expound the social order leading to the guidance of mankind, they are right, but if they aim only at social organization on the material level, it can be attained with the help of the intellect. In other words, recognition of laws regarding social life depends upon the advantages which we intend to achieve by establishing a society.

The aforementioned argumentation needs to prove that since sufficient grounds for clashes of interest do not exist nor complicated relationships predominate in primitive societies, it is not necessary to send down Divine revelation to such societies. Everyone has the opportunity to make use of abounding natural resources, and solutions can easily be found for the clashes of interest. It is however, believed that no society, irrespective of primitiveness, is needless of laws. But, the need for laws, originating from an authority beyond mankind, for small and primitive societies is not so obvious. If we regard the philosophers' arguments concerning prophetic missions as a means of achieving objectives beyond worldly order, the second problem will also be solved.

The philosophers' argument does not expect Divine revelation to descend for all individuals and all social issues, but restricts it to those which lie beyond human intellection. On the other hand, a large number of the Qur'anic verses refer to the judgments of human intellect. Therefore, this argument may not adequately justify the Divine revelation of such verses.[2]

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1. Muhamnmad Husayn Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 2, pp. 133, 147-149, 156.

2. Question: In their argumentation, philosophers endeavored to prove the necessity of sending down Divine revelation rather than proving that good guidance depended upon the intellect; though elsewhere, they mention that good guidance was regarded as one of the advantages of the prophetic mission.

Answer: The above problem admits that the necessity of sending down Divine revelation is merely restricted to what lies beyond human understanding, but sending down Divine revelation in other instances is not required though appropriate, and advantageous. Regarding the difference between the necessity of Divine revelation and its advantage, the philosophers' argument does not prove the necessity of Divine revelation as guidance. At most, the intellect considers it to be good. Besides, philosophers did not mention the necessity of guidance in intelligible areas.

The above argument seems to focus on the shortcoming of human intellection, whereas, man's inclination toward guidance necessitates sending down Divine revelation. The fact is that motivating man to act is more important than granting perception, because it can not be achieved without faith and Divine revelation. For instance, a large number of smokers admit that smoking cigarettes is harmful, but they do not quit it. Man enjoys the inclination (sentiments, feelings, passions) aspect besides the epistemic aspect. Man's strong inclination leads him to proceed toward an object perceived by him. Divine revelation infuses man with energy and drives him to proceed toward his objective.[1]

2.2. Knowing God or Science, and proceeding on the path toward God

Mystics regard Divine revelation as necessary for knowing God and treading the path toward Him. In this approach, the purpose of human existence is to tread the path toward Almighty God. They need a guide who receives Divine revelation from God, teaches them the required Divine knowledge, familiarizes them with existential truths, gains and losses, accrued and incurred on the path, and guides them toward their destination.[2] Sayyid Haydar Amuli, the distinguished eighth/fourteenth century mystic, states: "by Divine prophetic mission, mystics mean imparting Divine truths, i.e. knowing the Essence of God Almighty and his Names, Attributes, and Decrees."[3] Imam Khomeini, who was a leader, a mystic, and a wayfarer treading the Divine path, regarded the main

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1. Question: While proving the necessity of prophetic missions, why did philosophers not intend to comprehensively state the functions of Divine revelation, or incorporate them in their discussion?

Answer: The philosophers did not mention all the functions of Divine revelation, but restricted their proofs to the epistemic necessity and failed to address the other proofs.

2. Cf. 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Lahiji, Gozide-ye Gohar-e Morad, ed. Samad Movahhed, pp. 254-255. Mulla Sadra regards the development of self to be of four stations: 1. Journey from creatures toward God. 2. Journey from the Truth (haqq) toward the Truth. 3. Journey from the Truth toward the creatures. 4. Journey from the creatures toward the creatures through the creatures. (Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar al-Arba'a*, vol. 1, p. 13).

3. Sayyid Haydar Amuli, Jami' al-Asrar wa Manba' al-Anwar, p. 379.

purpose of Divine revelation and prophetic mission as making God known to mankind: "Prophets aimed at knowing God. They actually tried to know God."[1]

Evaluation

Mystics obviously considered the role of Divine revelation in knowing God and treading the path toward Him as their final goal and regarded knowledge as intellectual as well as divinely inspired. According to them, the attainment of such knowledge does not conflict with the teachings which finally lead man to that goal. People like Imam Khomeini extend the realm of religion to administration of justice and legislation of the religious system; but, if one restricts the need for Divine revelation to knowing God as their first, rather than final goal, it will require deliberation.

2.3. Assignment of duties leads to human perfection

Contrary to Ash'arite theologians, Shiite and Mu'tazilite theologians emphasize the rule of intellectual good and evil, as well as the rule of Grace, in order to prove the necessity of sending down Divine revelation. This line of argument is stated differently in theological works, but share the following premises:

The first premise: The Divine assignment of duties for men, as His servants, has intellectual goodness, since it includes expediencies, without which intellectual goodness is not produced. Such assignment of duties leads to human perfection. Theologians call this "Goodness of duty." On the other hand, imparting religious duties by God is His favor bestowed upon his servants.[2]

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1. Imam Khomeyni, *Sahifa-ye Nur*, vol. 7, p. 250.

2. Theologians employ the term Grace (lutf) in the sense of what makes the servant nearer to obedience and makes him far from committing sins. A number of theologians have divided "favor" into two kinds: lutf muhassal and lutf muqarrab. Lutf muhassal is what causes man to fulfill his assigned duties voluntarily, i.e. obey God and abstain from committing sins. Lutf muqarrab is what causes man to approximate the fulfillment of duties, i.e. pave the way for obedience. Imparting the assigned duties is considered as lutf, because it causes the duty bound to obey God through his own will (lutf muhassal) or at least approximate its fulfillment and the way be paved for him (lutf muqarrab). In either case, imparting the assignment of duties may lead to human perfection

The second premise: As required by the rule of Grace, it behoves God to bestow mercy upon His servants and take the required steps for their perfection.

Consequently, it behoves God to legislate religious laws and impart them to man or to assign His servants to perform good deeds and quit inappropriate ones. Since it is necessary to expound the duties to His servants, the existence of an intermediary is required to send down Divine revelation to men.[1]

Evaluation

A number of ambiguities in the argument, cast it into doubt. The argument is based upon the acceptance of the rule of Grace, whereas, the reason for the rule and its necessity, on the part of God, are open to question.

Besides, the establishment of the dimensions of the problem of intellectual good and evil, and distinguishing practical problems from theoretical ones is a vast topic in philosophy and theology. Of course, it does not denote falsity of the theologians' premises, but it reveals successive meanderings, which may be preferably replaced by another method for proving the necessity of Divine revelation.[2]

2.4. Recognition of the path toward perfection

A number of thinkers have expounded the necessity of sending down Divine revelation on man's need to perceive the path toward perfection. For instance, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi employs three premises to expound his argumentation:

1. The purpose of creating man is to tread the path toward perfection by

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(see: 'Allama Hilli, *Kashf al-Murad*, pp. 350-351). A number of theologians, e.g. Ayatollah Subhani identify muhassal and muqarrab lutfs and regard their differences as abstract concepts (see: Muhammad Taqi Subhani, *Risala fi 'l-Tahsin wa 'l-Taqbih al-'Aqliyyin*, p. 91).

1. See: Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, *Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-I'tiqad,* with the commentary of 'Allama Hilli, *'Abu 'l-Hasan Sha'rani*, pp. 375-377; Shaykh Mufid, *Musannafat al-Shaykh al-Mufid*, vol. 10, pp. 34-46; Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tusi, *al-Iqtisad, al-Hadi ila Tariq al-Rashad*, pp. 78-80.

2. Muhammad Taqi Mesbah, *Rahnama-shenasi*, pp. 26-27.

performing acts voluntarily, which can only be achieved through free choice. In other words, man is created to obtain the capacity to receive and enjoy the bounties which are meant to perfect men through prayer and obedience of His commands. God Almighty wishes to make man attain perfection. However, this can only be attained by performing voluntary acts, so he enjoys free choice. Naturally, one of the paths leads to adversity and chastisement, indirectly subject to Divine will.

2. Besides possessing the capacity of performing acts, paving the way to perform different acts, and develop an inclination toward such acts, man needs to make a distinction between good and evil, decent and indecent acts. He can freely choose his way toward perfection by recognizing his goal, the way to achieve it, apprised of its vicissitudes and precipices. Therefore, Divine will necessitates man's capacity of employing the required means to recognize them; otherwise, he would be like someone who invites a guest to his house, but does not inform him of its location nor directions to reach it. It is obvious that such conduct would be unwise and it would defeat the purpose. This premise requires no further explanations or details.

3. Man's perception, arising from the collaboration of the senses and the intellect, plays a major role in meeting the demands of his life, but is not sufficient to recognize the true path toward perfection in all individual and social, material and spiritual, worldly and otherworldly dimensions. If there exists no other alternative to satisfy such needs, the Divine purpose of creating man can not be achieved.

The three premises lead to the conclusion that Divine wisdom necessitates that God provides man with another way, beyond sense and intellect, to recognize an all-embracing way toward perfection, so that men may benefit from it. This way is the Divine revelation put at the prophets' disposal. They enjoy it directly and others benefit from it through them as intermediaries and obtain the required means to attain final happiness.[1]

Similar argumentations have been provided by other thinkers, such as

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1. Muhammad Taqi Mesbah, *Amuzesh-e 'Aqa'ed*, pp. 177-178; also see his other work: *Rahnama-shenasi*, pp. 27-36; *Rah va Rahnama-shenasi*, pp. 10-19.

Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani and Ahmad Amin.[1]

Evaluation

Three points are to be considered concerning this argument:

The former argument, proving the necessity of assigning prophetic missions, merely necessitates the exposition of the ordainments unintelligible to human intellect, whereas the Holy Qur'an includes many verses intelligible to human intellect, but the aforementioned argument fails to prove them.[2]

In the first premise, this argument takes for granted the existence of God and states perfection as the goal of man's creation. For the same reason, the aforementioned thinkers' expositions on the necessity of Divine revelation present arguments proving the existence of God and His attributes. but it would be better to prove the necessity of referring to a source other than God, so that it may sound more acceptable to someone who does not profess any religion; after that, it would be better to explain the necessity of sending down Divine revelation.

1. Ahmad Amin, *al-Kamil fi 'l-Islam*, vol. 1, p. 166. Ayatollah Sobhani provides the same as one of the arguments necessitating prophethood. (Ja'far Sobhani, *al-Ilahiyyat 'la Huda 'l-Kitab wa 'l-Sunna wa 'l-'Aql*, vol. 3, pp. 31-37; *Muhadarat fi 'l-Ilahiyyat, abridged* by 'Ali Rabbani Gulpayigani, pp. 355-358).

2. For further details see the third problem concerning the philosophers' argument.

2.5. Select exposition – granting insight and incentive toward perfection

To better expound the necessity of sending down Divine revelation and to refer to it, it would be better to pave the way for eliminating the shortcomings of the intellect and volition on the way to attain perfection. Divine revelation assists us in recognizing the path toward guidance and reinforces the motives of attaining it. Further explanation follows below.

Man, the multi-dimensional being

Man's existence is complicated. A number of its aspects have been studied in philosophical, psychological, and anthropological works. To recognize man's intricacies, it would be worthwhile to consider the cognitive, emotional, social, ethical aspects and their consequences, which form an individual's character. Man's different existential aspects are inter-related. Men often neglect their own existential intricacies and inadvertently waste away their great existential capacities. They do not spend the required time to know their capacities, let alone perfect themselves through accurate perception. Man is not limited to his material dimension, but possesses a spiritual dimension or self. Considering this point may assist us in further clarifying his intricacy.[1]

Capacity for perfection

Each of these dimensions can be perfected. Man is able to perfect his physical dimension, make use of and strengthen his physical capacities, take part in weight lifting, racing, wrestling and the like competitions and win prizes. Similarly, man can benefit from spiritual perfection. The reinforcement of physical capacities may not be regarded as the *only* merits specific to man, as men and animals share this feature. Many animals are physically stronger than man. No matter how hard man endeavors at all times to practice weight lifting, boxing and the like sports, he cannot confront a number of wild animals. Man's true perfection lies in more exalted virtues, i.e. the human specific

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1. Plausible arguments, e.g. character stability, indivisibility, not being place-bound and experimental evidence, e.g. communication with spirits, true dreams, and telepathy reveal the spirituality of the human soul, see: Hasanzadeh Amuli, Hasan, 'Uyun Masa'l al-Nafs, pp. 389-400; Rajabi, *Ensan-shenasi*, pp. 109-112; Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa 'l-Tanbihat*, vol. 2, pp. 292-296.

dimensions, which distinguish him from animals. By the adverb *only* and the fact that attaining physical perfection may be *only* considered as his specific privilege, we mean that if physical perfection be employed for further perfection of the individual or the Islamic society, it can also attain a more exalted value. Discussions on philosophical anthropology and practical philosophy reveal that man has different dimensions, and his spiritual dimension is of a higher station, because true perfection lies in spiritual perfection and finally, in closeness to God, rather than in the development of material dimensions.

Desire to achieve perfection

All men are interested in themselves, and consequently, they are interested in attaining enjoyment, abstaining from pains, and achieving perfection. Interest in oneself lies within everybody and it is not specific to a certain people, nation, or period. It was the same in the remote past and it is the same in modern times. Even those who commit suicide do so in order to free themselves from the pain and grief of this life. They think that by taking their own lives, they will liberate themselves from physical pain.

Seek to recognize the path toward perfection

Since man is fond of himself and his happiness, he seeks to find the path toward perfection and performs acts which guide him in this direction. Consequently, the history of human thought reveals that men have always been interested in self-discovery, because they find it a prelude to the recognition of their own perfection.

Possess intellect and free choice

Man possesses intellect and free choice. Intellect here, means the capacity to perceive generalities as well as the logical capability to achieve different epistemic goals. It is the source of theoretical sciences. This capacity is man-specific and in sharp contrast with animal features. Men possess different levels of intellect.[1] On the other hand, man enjoys

1. Ghazzali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, vol. 1, pp. 104-106; Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *Sharh-e Usul-e Kafi*, vol. 1, pp. 222-229. In the traditions narrated on the authority of the infallible, at times, the intellect is defined as the means of worshipping God and arriving in paradise. ("al-'ql ma 'ubida bihi al-rahman wa 'ktusiba bihi 'l-jinan", Kulayni, *Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 11). It seems that in this definition, mention is made of the higher significance of the intellect. The

free choice. Two points are to be taken into consideration in this respect:

The term free choice does not mean absolute free choice, i.e. free choice is *relative* and different from *power*. Preliminary practice by the individual himself for acts deemed to be beyond human capacity lead to his success or failure to perform further acts. For instance, one is not physically fit to lift a one-hundred kilogram weight without prior exercises, and failure can be due to previous optional acts. Man's incapacity to perform certain acts is, however, not always due to his former inappropriate choices, but it may be the consequence of non-voluntary, genetic, environmental, physical, and psychological factors. Individuals may be divested of free choice in some instances, but it originates, in many instances, from their previous optional practices.

Man, many times, performs certain acts voluntarily, which play a major role in the positive or negative formation of his character. Based on his own decisions, man keeps moulding his soul at all times. No one can decide not to perform any act and preserve his soul. Such a decision is also an act carried out by free choice. As long as man is alive, he is obliged to perform innumerable acts, like thinking, walking, eating, sleeping, moving, choosing jobs, talking with others, and through each and every act he moulds his character and soul. His optional acts of today play a major role in divesting him of his free choice tomorrow. If he has an appropriate plan of action, he will shape his character and future positively; otherwise, he will ruin and misguide himself. Such a course begins in early childhood, particularly adolescence, and continues incessantly till the last moment of life

Possessor of contradictory passions

Man possesses various, contradictory passions and feelings. His material and momentary passions often confront elevated inclinations which make choosing the path to perfection harder for him. Concupiscence can easily trample man's conscience and inherent nature.

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highest act which may be performed through the capacity of perception is to worship the Creator of the world and get closer to God; but since we intend to prove the principle of the necessity of referring to Divine revelation and religion, it would be better to ignore the religious definition of the intellect and turn to a concept which is shared by believers and non-believers.

Man's epistemic and psychological shortcomings on the path to guidance

Despite his relative efficiency in meeting material needs, man's epistemic capacities, including his outward senses and the intellect, are not adequate to find the true path to happiness. Man has to identify various variants on his way and make plans accordingly to achieve his material goals. His guidance toward perfection is in need of a coherent plan based on a thorough awareness of all the material and spiritual, individual and social, worldly and otherworldly variants; but the outward senses and the intellect lack the adequate capacity to perceive such issues.

Man cannot independently employ his psychological capacities to tread the path toward perfection and guidance. His struggle against the tempest of contradictory inclinations and passions divest him of the capacity to act upon the dictates of the intellect and conscience, and as a consequence, he is easily victimized by his bestial self.

Theology

Man requires other means to recognize the true path to perfection and obtain the capacity to proceed toward it. Almighty God does not abandon man, divested of the means of guidance, in the dark. He has created man as a choosing, wise, and perfection-seeking creature in possession of contradictory inclinations. It would be unwise and in contradiction with Divine attributes if He did not pave his way,.

Conclusion

We may conclude that Divine revelation is necessary, as the impossibility to receive it by everyone necessitates the Divine appointment of prophets to their missions.[1]

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1. 'Allama Tabataba'i presents another argument for the necessity of the prophetic mission, termed as the argument of wisdom, which differs, to some extent, from our exposition and it would be of use to mention it:

In case the existence of the Creator, Higher and more Sublime than all the creatures is proven, such a God never performs any unwise act. Since He is invisible, He ought to appoint messengers to guide mankind toward their Creator and instruct them about good and evil acts. Such commanders to good and prohibitors from evil are the Divinely appointed prophets who appear in societies with prophetic signs and their mission is confirmed by God through evidence and proofs such as raising the dead and curing the sick. (*al-Mizan*, vol.

The summary of the eight premises are as follows:

Man is an intricate being with the capacity to attain perfection.

Attaining perfection requires epistemic and psychological means.

The Intellect, experience, and conscience lack the adequate capacities of recognition and motivation.

We are in need of some other means, but our lack of preparation for the required preliminaries to achieve this goal is inconsistent with Divine wisdom.

We may conclude that sending down Divine revelation is, therefore, necessary.

From among the eight premises, the first seven premises prove the necessity of referring to a source, higher than the ordinary epistemic sources, and act upon the guidance of that higher source. The addition of the last premise reveals the necessity of sending down Divine revelation.

If one, in the case of necessity to have access to Divine revelation, claims that he is solely attached to worldly joys and recognizes them as the only form of perfection, we can say that man is a perfectionist, but can tread the wrong path in the process of searching the true one. It is impossible to specify true perfection without taking standards into consideration. A child or a young adult may say that he considers playing, watching movies, amusing himself, and quitting studying to be various forms of perfection. Could we admit that his perfection lies in performing such acts? To recognize perfection, one should know the truth of mankind. Philosophical anthropology reveals that man's soul is his privilege and lasting truth, and his body is a means of rendering service to the soul. Since the sizes of shoes and books are not considered to be man's privilege nor his true perfection, his material and fleeting joys are not considered to be so either. Man's true perfection is his spiritual perfection, not his material joys. God is the only truly perfect Being. Consequently, the human soul's true perfection lies in proceeding toward

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2, p. 146; see: Mustafa Khalili, *Andishe-ha-ye Kalami-ye 'Allama Tabataba'i*, pp. 296-298).

Him.[1]

On the basis of the above premises, referring to Divine revelation is logically necessary. In case man desires to attain virtues and his epistemic and motivating means are not adequate to achieve this goal, it will be analogically necessary to refer to Divine revelation to know the approaches to perfection and make use of them in ones life.

1. For a further detailed discussion see: Mujtaba Mesbah, *Bonyad-e Akhlaq*, pp. 237-242.

3. CLAIMING THE ADEQUACY OF SCIENCE AND THE INTELLECT

A number of materialist philosophers and extremist rationalists of the Renaissance and the age of Modernism, prevented many people from professing a faith in religion. The doubts and cynicism of Western thinkers regarding religion arose from a variety of factors:

- cultural, social, and religious weaknesses prevalent in the Middle Ages;
- scientific and intellectual stagnation;
- the crusades;
- trials and execution of scientists;
- crimes perpetrated by the church against physicists, astronomers, and women;
- distortion of the Bible and its inclusion of superstitious and implausible beliefs;
- development of philosophical and scientific thoughts during the Renaissance and the age of Modernism;
- impressive developments and advancement in industry, technology, and humanities in the age Modernism.

This led to religious phobia in the West, and caused other countries to incline towards them, impressed by their industrial revolution and advance in technology, science, and intellection.

Anti-religious rationalism culminated in the 18th century, the Age of Enlightenment in the West. This period was called the Age of Reason. Great advance took place in physics, modern chemistry, and biology, particularly in the preliminary stages of the Industrial Revolution in England, and society was deeply affected by the technological

application of physics. Major changes occurred in man's outlook towards the world and existence, affecting society on a very large scale.[1]

Confrontation against religion was so intense that some people could not tolerate to hear the name of God. For instance, when one of the proponents of natural religion was delivering a speech at the French Academy in 1798, a number of the audience protested suddenly, and one of them shouted: "Please do not mention the name of God here."[2] Paul Henri d'Holbach and his like, considered nature to be praiseworthy: "O Nature! O sovereign of all existence, and ye, O virtue, intellect, and truth, her most endeared nurtured beings! Be our gods for ever!"[3] The prevailing spirit was trust in man's perfection and attaining the desired society by making use of science in all spheres of life.[4]

Dr. 'Abd al-Karim Soroush is one of those who have trodden this path. He interconnects man's scientific advancements in the modern age and the needlessness of religion, thus: "The advent of science onto the scene of the history of man is the most significant occurrence in the modern world. It distinguished modern man and the modern world from ancient man and the ancient world. We do not present the theoretical and practical preliminaries regarding its advent and naissance; in any case, the scene of history underwent transformation upon the advent of science…. The difference in awareness, even if we do not say the development of awareness, has resulted in a colossal development in the world, which nothing, not even religion and religious practice, can resist."[5]

Then he proceeds to answer the question:

Is modern man still in need of religion, or needless of religion? If needless of religion, what is meant by this needlessness?

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1. Ian Barbur, *'Elm va Din*, p. 70.

2. *Seyr-e Takamol-e 'Aql-e Novin*, vol. 1, pp. 334-335 quoted from Kherad-varzi, p. 43.

3. Ian Babur, *'Elm va Din*, p. 77.

4. *Ibid.* p. 71. For further details in this regard, see the chapter "The trend of the scholars' belief in religion until the 20th century.

5. *Kiyan* (periodical), 29, p. 12.

He states: "It is obvious that man is needless of prophets and their teachings."

This needlessness of religion perturbs believers and they ask: "How can man be needless of religion?"[1]

He answers: "A distinction should be made between good and bad needlessness. Instances for the former include the student's needlessness of his teacher after graduation and that of the patient after treatment. Instances of the latter include the student's needlessness of his teacher prior to graduation and that of the patient before treatment." Then he concludes that modern man's needlessness is of the former type.[2]

Evaluation

In reply to the above claim, it may be said that, despite man's advance in experimental sciences (i.e., physics, chemistry, medicine, mechanics, and electrical engineering), and humanities (i.e., philosophy, logic, psychology, sociology, law, and management), he requires another means of guidance. The ordinary sources leading to advance in science are results of man's scientific and intellectual thinking, whereas, none of the two means, despite innumerable uses, is adequate for man's guidance, due to the following limitations.

It is to be noted that discussing the shortcomings of wisdom and science does not necessitate their total negation, nor their efficiency in their specific fields, but what is meant by such shortcomings exceeds their capacities. Some maintain that the discussion on the limitations of the twain means pose a challenge to religion or de-rationalization, whereas delimitation of the fields of epistemic sources necessitates an accurate methodology and its better use. The first step in scientific advancement is delimitation of sciences. The less blurred the limits the more accurate the conclusions.

Undoubtedly, they have rendered innumerable services for humanity and one of the great obligations of the Islamic community is to increase their usefulness. Believers make maximum use of the material sources, science

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1. *Ibid.* pp. 12-13.

2. Dr. Soroush's view on the good needlessness of religion and his further arguments shall be discussed in detail in the chapter "Arguments substantiating needlessness of religion

and intellect, to achieve Divine goals, By thus doing they attain their objectives earlier than expected. Divine and exalted goals can be achieved earlier and more easily than expected, by a sound body, a developed and independent society endowed with the required defensive capability, equipped with modern equipment. Health requires state-of-the-art medicine, public hygiene, and a more superior system of medical education. Attaining an exemplary society requires the efficient use of science in various spheres, including agriculture, industry, mineralogy, and urban planning. Paving the way to attain Divine goals requires the urgent use of science and intellect. Therefore, this discussion does not ignore their positive and efficient dimensions, but aims to point out man's limits and its effect on his knowledge. Limitations are characteristics of matter. Eyes cannot hear, ears cannot see, but the incapacity of each to function instead of the other does not mean that either of the two is incapacitated. Since successful functioning of the human body requires the appropriate use of each of them, a comprehensive elevation of man needs to give careful attention to data concerning experimental, intellectual, and Divinely inspired sciences and use it all appropriately. The Book and the traditions have placed human perception on such an elevated level that Divine revelation complements it rather than replaces it. From the Islamic point of view, the three complement each other and ignoring any of them will lead to problems and obstacles on the path leading to establishing the Divine ideal state.

Shortcomings of science

Science is inadequate for human guidance and includes the following shortcomings:

The first shortcoming

The object of perception and judgment concerning experimental sciences embraces material and tangible matters, but falls short in judging the spiritual dimension and moral virtues. Experimental sciences may neither affirm nor reject the issues lying beyond the field of experimental sciences. He, who rejects everything that lies beyond experiment resembles one who cannot see behind the wall, so rejects the existence of anything there. Because of the limitations of experimental sciences, they are inadequate to guide man and assist him in attaining perfection. Man possesses two dimensions, the material and the spiritual. His guidance plan needs to take the two dimensions and their interrelation into account.

Science merely takes the material dimension into consideration, whereas the guidance plan needs to consider all the existential dimensions of mankind. For instance, a medical physician cannot present all the required instructions for somatic and psychological care.

The second shortcoming

Because of the previous limitation, the results obtained by experimental sciences cannot be accepted even in all man's material matters. Man's dimensional nature, i.e. the interrelation existing between the body and soul, and between the material and moral perfections, necessitates applying the results of experimental sciences in so far as man's spiritual and moral dimensions remain unharmed. However, if certain damage sounds contingent or certain, following such results shall be considered unwise. If treating a disease affecting one part of the body is assumed to be harmful to another part, a committee of specialists is set up to take all sides into consideration. While practicing material instructions to strengthen the physical dimension, the dimensions leading to man's perfection should also be taken into account. For instance, science and medicine say it is necessary to consume nutritious victuals in the time of hunger. However if there happens to be a hungry and needy person, human and spiritual perfection and morality necessitate that one renders him assistance, even if it means reducing the amount of one's victuals. In case one merely considers one's own bodily needs, he will ignore the needy. Women, covering themselves with a veil in the presence of *non-mahrams* (those who they can marry) is cumbersome and restricts women's freedom of movement, and is particularly bothersome in hot weather, but can this cumbersomeness justify the nudity noticed in workplaces and common areas? It is unjustifiable due to evil consequences which pave the way for the dissemination of moral corruption. The Islamic faith has declared certain acts as *haram* (unlawful) due to their adverse effects. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an mentions the unlawfulness of drinking alcoholic drinks and gambling:

﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَآ إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَآ أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ ٱلْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

"[O Prophet] you are asked concerning alcoholic drinks and gambling. Say: In them is a great sin, and [some] benefits for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit. And they ask you what they ought to

spend. Say: "That which is beyond your needs." Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought."[1]

This Holy verse reveals that its laws take the positive and material dimensions of matters into account, but at times, if the consequences of the positive and negative dimensions are taken to be negative, they are declared unlawful. Consequently, because of the incapability of experimental sciences to know man's immaterial dimensions, it will be inappropriate to blindly follow their instructions even concerning material issues, unless one is certain they will not harm other dimensions.

The third shortcoming

The Being whose goal is to pave the way for man's perfection, takes his existential dimensions, capabilities, the material and immaterial, into consideration, to present a comprehensive plan. Science is incapable of providing answers for all human questions and dilemmas. Scientists have confirmed it in recent decades. A contemporary scholar remarked: "I attended a conference in 1998, in which two outstanding cosmologists explicitly informed me that their studies revealed that science was not self sufficient and to find answers to a number of questions, one had to turn to God."[2]

Question: Are sciences, through their interrelations, able to present a general view of the world?

Answer: Firstly, the interrelation among experimental sciences cannot be denied. Such an interrelation does not result in a general view, but reveals a more precise, experimental, and specific judgment. For instance, physiology is related to biology, as mechanics is connected to mathematics. The interconnection is of the type which is termed as "the prerequisite nexus," i.e. one precedes and is a prerequisite for the other. The preceding prerequisite (biology) serves as the ground for the experimental study of the other science (physiology), but it does not result in acquiring a general view regarding existence and man. Secondly, not only do experience and experimental sciences lack a general view of the world of existence, but they are incapable of presenting a general and final argument even concerning tangible and experimental matters.

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[1] *Holy Qur'an 2:219.*

2. Mahdi Golshani, Keyhan (periodical) 7.11.1357 and 22.4.1378.

Experiment can, at most, reveal the result of experiments acquired so far, but it can not provide an answer to the question whether the manner shall stay the same, or any experimental contradiction shall be found. In cases where experimental scientists have presented general dictates, they have stepped beyond experiment and have made use of the intellect. A general view, even in experimental matters, can be possible with intellection.

Shortcomings of the intellect

The intellect is another significant means of serving man, but even this means cannot provide man with a comprehensive guiding plan. The application of the atomistic view is one of the limitations of science, but it is improbable in case of the intellect. The intellect possesses the capacity to have a holistic view. It can proceed beyond the particulars of the material world and have a holistic view toward them, deal with the goals of life and make use of existing means and capacities. Despite the capacity of the intellect to have a holistic view, other limitations reveal that it is incapable of presenting a comprehensive guiding plan. A number of its shortcomings may be enumerated as follows:

The first shortcoming

The intellect may, to some extent, recognize man's immaterial dimension and the world's immaterial affairs. It perceives the generalities regarding man's moral issues and guidance, but is incapable of perceiving all the particulars. For instance, the intellect proves God's existence and its immateriality, but is unable to understand the particulars of Divine attributes. It proves the principle of the existence of the otherworld, but is unable to expound the particulars of the world of purgatory, Dooms Day, paradise, and hell. On the one hand, the intellect does not reject the world to come, but proves it. On the other hand, it finds itself unable to perceive its particulars. Understanding the particular realities belonging to the other world lie beyond human intellect.

Human intellect perceives the general principles of moral values and spiritual growth, but lacks the capability to provide the means to achieve them. It perceives justice and injustice, but at times, faces obstacles in distinguishing between instances of injustice, rights and justice. Human intellect affirms the value of strengthening the spiritual dimension of the individual and society; diminishing the attachment to this worldly life, money, concupiscence; the value of sacrifice and forgiveness; assisting

the oppressed and the deprived; perseverance and bravery in achieving exalted goals; struggling against tyranny and corruption; administering justice in society; awareness of virtues and their actualization in life. On the one hand, vices such as discord, harassment, backbiting, slander, murder, theft, strong attachment to money, concupiscence, fame and sacrificing all things for them, niggardliness, jealousy, dissimulation, flattery, despotism, oblivion of the spiritual dimensions of the soul, and the like are all reproached by the intellect. Despite the intellect's perception of moral values, it is in need of Divine revelation. Religion does not displace intellect, but uses it in order to achieve certain perfections which are deemed by the intellect as virtues.

Question: Are science and the intellect able to make man needless of Divine revelation through their collaboration by presenting particulars and generalities, respectively?

Answer: Science, to some extent, perceives the particulars of the tangible world, and intellect, to some extent, perceives the generalities of the tangible and intangible worlds.

However, intellect is inadequate to perceive:

- the particulars of the immaterial dimensions of man and the world,
- the quality of the interrelation among the various dimensions of man and,
- particular means of attaining guidance, perfection, and moral values.

Man's detailed guiding plan requires a source further cognizant of man's existential dimensions. Besides, intellect has certain limitations which will be mentioned later in this chapter.

Regarding the epistemic role of Divine revelation in the perception of the unseen world, the Holy Qur'an reads:

﴿مَّا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ ٱلْخَبِيثَ مِنَ ٱلطَّيِّبِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْغَيْبِ وَلَـٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَجْتَبِى مِن رُّسُلِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ﴾

"Nor will Allah disclose to [all of] you the secrets of the unseen, but Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He wills."[1]

It is beyond anyone's capacity to be apprised of the unseen. Consequently, God chooses from among his servants, a number of people to receive such knowledge and impart it to others. The Holy Qur'an also reads thus:

﴿ كَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولاً مِّنكُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ﴾

"Similarly we have sent among you a messenger of your own, reciting to you Our Verses and purifying you, and teaching you the Book and the wisdom, and teaching you that which you did not know."[2]

It also reads thus:

﴿ وَأَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمۡ تَكُن تَعۡلَمُۚ ﴾

"Allah has sent down to you the Book and the wisdom, and taught you that which you knew not."[3]

The intellect does not reject the realities inaccessible to it. No sensible man claims that what he has not perceived does not exist, but on the contrary, through the passage of time, man finds out further that he lacks the capacity to perceive many things. The wisest thinkers have been those who have admitted the incapacity of the intellect.

The second shortcoming

Establishing an argument or theory acceptable to man is different from demonstrating its value and reasonable argument. In other words, establishing a preliminary argument belonging to some other source is different from understanding it with the intellect. For instance, designing and building a historical monument, apart from aesthetic appreciation, lies in its harmony and solidity. Many people are able to design a building but lack the capacity to build it. Only a skilled architect

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1 *Holy Qur'an 3: 179.*

2. *Holy Qur'an 2: 151.*

3. *Holy Qur'an 4: 113.*

possesses the capacity to carry it out. Similarly, the intellect, at times, is capable of discovering the basis of religious ordainments, but incapable of understanding their preliminary design. Establishing fixed rules is harder than discovering the grounds lying behind them. Presenting a theory is more difficult than understanding and analyzing it. Therefore, the intellect, at times, is capable of uncovering the grounds lying behind religious laws, but it lacks the capacity to expound their fundamentals. In many cases, the intellect may perceive the parameters lying behind religious laws, but it cannot independently discover such laws.

The third shortcoming

Most of the reasonable judgments presented in humanities (e.g. psychology, sociology, law, political science) sound plausible, but all of them do not stand to reason. They are based on other experimental preliminaries and since man is ignorant of their experimental preliminaries or is uncertain of them, he is misguided. Such judgments are not only based on intellection, but also experimental sciences. An illustration of the point in question; the intellect thinks that men and women should reasonably enjoy the same economic rights, since they are both human beings from the same parents, but, it is a hasty judgment. First of all, the origin of right should be known. The intellect's final answer to this question is that in case, the grounds for the establishment of economic rights for two individuals happen to be equal, their rights should be equal, otherwise the rights of the two individuals should be different. The intellect is incapable of independently judging whether the grounds for establishing male and female economic rights are equal. The experimental sciences are supposed to establish the similarities and differences between men and women and expound their roles in society, i.e., constituting a family, having children and the social issues arising from them, so that the intellect can perceive the equality enjoyed by the two sexes.

In case the basis of rights happens to be one of the similarities between men and women, their rights will enjoy equality. But, if a difference results in the establishment of a certain right, their rights will also be different. If the stability of a family lies in woman's freedom and man's obligation to meet the economic demands of the family, granting such a privilege to the woman necessitates the bestowal of another economic privilege to the man. The intellect cannot independently perceive all the grounds underlying the establishment of the rights, similarities, and differences existing between men and women, since the intellect deals with general concepts, nor pass judgments concerning all particular cases, unless the premises stem from experimental sciences.[1]

Therefore, despite the invaluable results, derived from humanities, making use of them requires paying attention to the above issue and

1. Mesbah Yazdi, *Qalamrov-e Din* ["The Realm of Religion"], the Qom-based internet website: http://andishe%20qom%2082-10-13/Index.htm.

accounts for the higher error quotient in humanities, compared to purely experimental sciences.

Shortcomings shared by science and the intellect

In addition to the specific limitations of each of the two, other common shortcomings exist which impede their guiding capacities.

The first shortcoming

Man's ignorance in the spheres of experimental and intellectual sciences far exceeds his knowledge. As he obtains further knowledge, he perceives the undiscovered and unknown depths of existence. Consequently, we find scholars throughout the centuries admitting the frailties of the intellect and experience. Avicenna regards that man as the most ignorant who, as soon as he hears something, immediately denies its existence. According to him, as long as the nonexistence of something is proven, the wise do not deny its existence, but regard it as potentially existent. In his words, the wise man "places it in the crucible of potentiality."[1] Therefore, despite his epistemic capacities, man has limitations, which also limit his knowledge and intellect. Therefore, the guidance plan for the individual cannot be prepared merely by relying on man's perception, because his ignorance far exceeds his knowledge.

The second shortcoming

The results derived from experimental sciences may be divided into two classes, i.e., proven hypotheses or rejected hypotheses. The former are limited in number and do not present adequate instructions for man's guidance. The latter are abundant in number, but unreliable. A glance at the history of science reveals the large number of contradictory, rejected or contending hypotheses and theories.

The results of man's reasonable thoughts may also fall into two categories. The first category constitutes a) axioms whose conclusions are final and certain (the knowledge acquired by the empirical intellect, e.g. the impossibility of the conjunction of contradictory elements; the whole being greater than the part; man's self-substantiated knowledge, e.g. his knowledge concerning his psychological conditions and his existence; the knowledge acquired by the practical intellect, e.g. disgust

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1. Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyya*, vol. 1, p. 364.

for tyranny, egoism, niggardliness, jealousy, and the appeal of justice, self-sacrifice, equality; and, b) the final theoretical conclusions based on explicit and proven premises. The second category includes tentative and unproven theoretical conclusions and discordant intellectual claims. Of the two categories, the former are reliable but limited in number, and cannot present an adequate guiding plan for man. Those belonging to the second category are innumerable but unreliable.

It is impossible to rely totally on the intellect or science to guide man's existence and execute an unreliable plan. How can one allow contradictory and rejected scientific theories, tentative and falsifiable intellectual conclusions, no matter how numerous the intellectual claims, to lead man toward guidance?

Has not time shown the harmful consequences of relying on suspicious views and ideas? Has not man realized his epistemic incapacities? We find serious fluctuations and even total transformation in the thoughts of a number of the greatest philosophers. For instance, Wittgenstein, in two periods in his life, possessed two totally different and contradictory views, and by each of them impressed the West in such a manner that he totally transformed his contemporaries' philosophical trend of thought. At the beginning, he presented a theory which attracted and influenced contemporary philosophical thought. Within the next ten years, he abstained from expressing his thoughts, after which, he presented another theory which rejected all his former theories. His new theory was so impressive that, like his previous one, it attracted the prevailing philosophical thought. Another example is John Dewey, who went through three phases in his life with three different views. With such drastic fluctuations in the world's iconic thinkers' and philosophers' thoughts, how can their intellectual and tentative theories be considered as reliable? How can the general and particular plans for human guidance and perfection be vested with them, let alone other people's intellect? To appreciate the unreliability of intellect in the domain of theories, rather than axioms, it suffices to take a glance at the contradictory theories to which thinkers have had recourse in the history of man's life.

A review of the intellectual development of Western philosophy uncovers abundant vicissitudes. A number of iconic philosophers, e.g. Descartes, Kant, and Hegel played on absolute and unconditional rationalism for some time and merely regarded man and the world from this angle. After

the passage of time, they noticed their errors and recognized a number of the limitations in their approach. A number of them, e.g. John Locke, Berkeley, and Hume pursued the opposite side and proceeded with extreme empiricism. Shortly, others became cognizant of their errors and dispensed with their empiricist approach.

Man experienced bitterness in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Modern times. Then began a new era that entertained doubts. Man turned to his predecessors' extreme tendencies, inclined toward perplexities and absolute relativism, and meditated on modifications of the ancients' conclusions. Nietzsche stepped upon the stage, declared God's demise, and found a number of adherents, but after a while his views were criticized and rejected. Once Marxism prevailed in the arena of thought and politics, but its dominance lasted briefly and ended in failure in the spheres of theory and practice. Each and every epoch is dominated by the particular views of a number of outstanding intellectuals, a flourishing but confused platform is arranged attracting intellectuals as well as the general public. A glance at the history of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Modernism, and Postmodernism provides us with clear evidence of the same story. Despite serious contradictions among philosophical theories in different eras, even the contradictions of one single philosopher's thoughts at one time, divests human intellect of the capacity to guide man. Besides, the predicaments resulting from the errors of experimental sciences are relatively more serious than those of intellectual sciences, since the errors of the first category, at maximum, result in material and tangible losses, but those arising from the latter category are perceived later, after the opportunities are missed and have ended in the metamorphosis of human character and his depravity. If we are supposed to take lessons from human experience, it will be the grossest error to merely rely on the erroneous intellect for guidance. Man is not an inexpensive commodity to give the helm of his guidance to any man.

Question: Given the limitations of human intellect, why do we rely on it for a number of matters and regard it as reliable?

Answer: All the expressed errors are within the domain of tentative judgments which are not based on axioms. Theoretical propositions are tentative. They are to be scrutinized and then based on axioms, which are unfalsifiable.[1] It will be possible to obtain final conclusions, in case

1. It stands beyond our discussion to express the mystery of the unfalsifiability of primary axioms. For further information, see: Muhammad Taqi Mesbah, *Amuzesh-e Falsafe* ["Primer in Philosophy"], vol. 1, pp. 151-157; Muhammad Hosayn-zadeh, *Ma'refat-shenasi* ["epistemology"], pp. 43-48, 124-127.

knowledge is based on such propositions; however, the number of such results is inadequate to present a particular plan for guidance and perfection. Apart from primary axioms which belong to the theoretical intellect, there exist self-evident logical propositions in the domain of practical intellect which are acceptable to all humanity, such as the above mentioned virtues and vices. The majority of differences and suspicious propositions belong to cases in which the intellect attempts to present particular approaches. Consequently, we cannot present a comprehensive plan for guidance by relying on the intellect and sacrifice all our means for such a plan.

The third shortcoming

In case we disregard the invalid scientific and intellectual results, we are supposed to consider that all people cannot avail the optimal scientific and intellectual sophistication, and thereby benefit from them for their own guidance. Man possesses the faculty of perception within the domain of scientific and intellectual understanding, but there is a long distance to traverse prior to its actualization. Many people are unaware of the full flourishing of their scientific and intellectual capacity. How is man, in such circumstances, capable of making all his existential merits totally accessible to his experimental or intellectual perception?

Question: Is it possible to avail oneself of the opinions of the experts who have reached the apex of florescence?

Answer: As mentioned above, their reliable or conclusive opinions are limited in number, but such opinions are not adequate for attaining guidance. Their dubious opinions and inconclusive hypotheses cannot serve as acceptable authorities. It is not known whose ideas, from among the different ideas of thinkers, are to be accepted in order to attain a practical plan toward perfection. Considering the fact that the hypotheses are inconclusive and spending all the efforts in dubious ways is perilous, there exists no reason to prefer one over the other.

The fourth shortcoming

Knowledge and intellect may reach conclusions concerning the perception of certain realities, but such attainment may take long. Through the process of trial and error and objective observation of applying different, and at times, contradictory intellectual methods, man may distinguish between right and wrong ways in order to attain

guidance, but taking this course would entail the sacrifice of the capabilities of numerous generations and non-actualization of many virtues. The pursuit of a plan for guidance resembles finding precautions or treatment for existing diseases. However, a wise man does not accept to wait all his life for the reception of a medical prescription which was prescribed for him in his childhood. Similarly, for the sake of his growth, man should, in his prime of life, especially after adolescence, control his conduct by making use of a reliable guidance plan. The later he attains a guidance plan and applies it, the less he will attain perfection. After all, the chance of success in attaining perfection and developing his potentials starts decreasing through adolescence, youth and middle age. The perfection of morals, spirituality, education, and character should be paved in the first years of one's life. How can one benefit adequately from religious teachings if he perceives their values in his middle or old age? His character has already been shaped and he has lost a large portion of his capacities. Missing the chance is a great and irreparable loss for one who seeks perfection. He cannot wait for scientific and intellectual advancements to reach their end so that he may benefit from their results. Therefore, if certain teachings assist him in his development, he should recognize them as soon as possible and act accordingly.

The Qur'an is the means of guidance, through which God, from man's prime of life, makes all the required instructions available to him. On the one hand, we notice that Islamic teachings are based on the best courses of action which have been uncovered in time. For instance, many physical and hygienic instructions, laws and regulations, and Islamic material instructions have been gradually confirmed by experimental sciences, but such confirmation has been carried out in a number of centuries after the advent of Islam. It is quite possible that further Islamic laws find new scientific and intellectual support in future. Such instances include the following:

Consumption of pork is forbidden in Islamic law and it has been discovered in modern times that hygienically, it is harmful for man.

In a number of countries such as China, a large number of people have accommodated their regime according to that of Muslims, since medical studies carried out in that country indicate that, compared to the followers of other religions, less Muslims contract serious diseases such as hepatitis B.

It has been obvious nowadays that firstly slaughtering animal according to the Islamic law is more hygienic, since strangulation of animals, prevailing throughout the world, has adverse effects on the meat. Secondly, compared to other ways of slaughtering animals, they suffer less pain.

Nowadays, the medical value of many Islamic hygienic instructions about food consumption has been proven.

The fifth shortcoming

The dubious results achieved by the intellect and science might not lead man to salvation, but merely serve as a means to worldviews, aims, and inclinations determined somewhere else. Science serves as a means with different applications. The mere possession of means does not guarantee its appropriate application. Experimental sciences may be put to favorable or unfavorable use. The availability of this means does not result in man's needlessness of a guidance plan or approaches in their proper use.

In case science could be used independently to save man, it would not serve as a means for superpowers to maintain their cruel dominance. Instances include the United States and Israel that seek domination and carry out cruel massacres by making use of the weaponry produced through advancements in experimental sciences. The power-thirsty make use of the latest achievements in experimental sciences for destruction, massacre, and genocide. Nowadays, the state-of-the-art technology serves powers that directly or indirectly commit many crimes against humanity, particularly against weak societies.

On the other hand, protecting humanity against the rebels' insurgence, and also providing the oppressed nations with facilities require the same means. Therefore, in case experimental scientists are not guided, their developments may serve the enemies of humanity. Scientific advancements may entail unfavorable results if they are not accompanied by teachings providing man with guidance, virtues, and Divine revelation directing mankind on the way to salvation.

In *Science and Synthesis,* Julian Huxley, the iconic Western scientist, writes: "In our time, innumerable discoveries have been made possible through science, but science does not teach us its proper applications. In fact, science has played the role of a magician, and has set the perilous

genius, named technology, like an unfettered lunatic, on humanity."[1]

Like science, the intellect may be abused for attaining ominous ends and it may be influenced by sensual desires. The possibility of blending intellect with an individual's emotions and inclinations may cause humanity to lose their confidence in it. The history of man's thoughts reveals that numerous intellectual leaders have defended views in order to find followers and attain renown, and thereby a large number of people have been misled. The oppressive, godless and arrogant powers have, at all times, taken advantage of a number of thinkers and abused them in order to justify their own acts. All the colonial, imperialistic, and hypocritical designs and stratagems have been produced through intellectual conspiracies. It is the same instrumental intellect which has been criticized by many thinkers in the West. Intellection may be, consciously or unconsciously, impressed by passions. In this regard, Imam Sadiq ('a) states: "Love of the world causes man to become blind, deaf and dumb."[2] This tradition reveals that passions impress man's epistemic system.

One of man's instinctive and bestial inclinations is his tendency toward freedom, unfettered by any morals and liberated from behavioral restraints. Thus the Holy Qur'an reads:

﴿بَلۡ يُرِيدُ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنُ لِيَفۡجُرَ أَمَامَهُۥ﴾

"Nay! Man desires to continue committing sins."[3]

With such character flaws, man abuses his intellect. As stated in the Holy Qur'an, seditious men with sick hearts and intellects take recourse to similar Qur'anic verses and, by improper use of the intellect, attempt to interpret them according to their own aims and objectives.[4]

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1. Jean Forestier, *Bohran-e Daneshgah*, tr. 'Ali Akbar Kasma'i, p. 69.
2. *Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 136.
3. *Holy Qur'an 75: 5.*
4. *Holy Qur'an 3: 7.*

﴿هُوَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلَ عَلَيۡكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ مِنۡهُ ءَايَٰتٞ مُّحۡكَمَٰتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَٰبِهَٰتٞۖ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمۡ زَيۡغٞ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَٰبَهَ مِنۡهُ ٱبۡتِغَآءَ ٱلۡفِتۡنَةِ وَٱبۡتِغَآءَ تَأۡوِيلِهِۦۖ وَمَا يَعۡلَمُ تَأۡوِيلَهُۥٓ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُۗ

Consequently, every wise man cannot be followed. In addition to a higher perception, the guide and reformist who treads the Divine path is in need of a higher state of piety, (fearing God). One of the Divine clues to the infallibility of Prophets and Imams lies behind this point.

The sixth shortcoming

Restricting the basis of guiding individuals and society to human intellect and materialistic science and depriving them of the protection of Divine revelation gradually places man on a precipice and creates crucial complications.[1]

The seventh shortcoming

The utmost capacity of science and the intellect is to provide man with perception in a certain sphere, but besides the epistemic factor for man's guidance, we are also in need of the motivating factor. Man possesses the twain dimensions of perception and inclination. He does not necessarily actualize what he knows and understands, but one of his problems has been the fact that he does not act upon his knowledge and tramples his intellectual knowledge. Instinctive and bestial passions and the domination of moral vices easily suppress human emotions and intellect. People lack the firm will to act upon ethical principles which are perceptible to all. For instance, many people are aware of the harms

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وَٱلرَّٰسِخُونَ فِي ٱلۡعِلۡمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِهِۦ كُلّٞ مِّنۡ عِندِ رَبِّنَاۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ ﴿

"It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are verses that are entirely clear, they are the foundations of the Book (and any complications may be removed by referring to them) and others are similar (because of the exaltedness of the material and other intellects, different possibilities may appear, but considering the clear verses, their meanings become clear). So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking al-fitna (in order to mislead people), and seeking (an inaccurate interpretation) for its hidden meanings, but none knows its hidden meanings save Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge (and seek to understand the mysteries of all the Qur'anic verses in the light of Divine Knowledge) say we believe in it; the whole of it are from our Lord. And none receive admonition (and do not understand this fact) except men of understanding."

1. A detailed discussion will follow in the chapter "The West and the damaging consequences of excessive emphasis on knowledge and intellect."

caused by smoking, but they do not quit it. It has been in the news that somebody murdered his daughter to gain wealth. A 38 year old man threw his 9 year old, hearing-impaired daughter under a truck in order to receive $ 200, 000 as insurance compensation and was convicted of willful murder.[1] It is through the conscience that all people understand the value of respecting senior citizens and parents, assisting the depressed, the needy, and children, but certain factors may adversely impress the conscience and enfeeble it. Everyone dislikes the modern life which is governed by machines and financial values affecting human relationships and human emotions. They grieve about such misfortunes and endeavor to find an exit out of them. Religious teachings awaken the conscience and prevent it from being victimized by the frailty of emotions. In contrast, irreligiousness may result in weakening the conscience.

Trampling down moral values and the conscience is not only specific to the general public, it includes men of thought and reason as well. They easily become afflicted with arrogance and egotism and sacrifice moral values for them. In certain instances, the complications of men of science, possessing specific capabilities, exceed those of others. According to the secretary general of the Association for Struggling against Smoking Tobacco Products, findings of a scientific study carried out by the Iranian Medical Organization reveal that physicians smoke two times more than others. The percentages of Iranian female and male smoking physicians exceed 4 and 28.3 respectively.[2]

What was mentioned above explicitly indicates that science and the intellect do not adequately serve as motives for action, nor produce the required power to act. Man is in need of a more rigorous power to approach perfection and abstain from error. Faith and religious beliefs play significant roles in this regard. Acknowledging Divine revelation and believing in it create a particular power in man, incomparable to

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1. International *Ettela'at* (periodical), 9.9.1375, p. 4.

2. Bulletin, No. 57, p. 36. Regarding the same, Muhammad Reza Masjedi, at Iran's Fifteenth Conference of the Experts' Medical Association stated: "unfortunately, our physicians who are expected to take fundamental steps in the prevention and the decrease in using tobacco products, do not believe in the real harms caused by such products."

other internal and external motives, which set him in motion. Religious faith produces the energy which leads man to treading the path toward perfection and compels him to harmonize appropriate conduct with accurate self-perception.

Thus, religion may be considered as a support for the actualization of the ordainments of practical wisdom. Listening to the words originating from a sacred source like God entails further impressions and creates a more rigorous will to act. Man is potentially more inclined to obey the Sublime Being and the Divinely appointed saints, the most elevated in station among created beings. Besides, considering the chastisement and reward for human actions, man is compelled to act according to faith and religion. Consequently, excluding religion, morality leads nowhere, even if it sets man to proceed, abandons him halfway and never assists him in attaining his goal. In fact, religion invigorates the dormant conscience. Science and the intellect lack such capacity, but accompanied by religion, they overcome this deficiency. Thus, religion does not contradict science and the intellect, rather complements them. Religion uncovers and extracts the treasures of the intellect and leads experimental sciences towards felicity and virtue.

The eighth shortcoming

Despite possessing inward epistemic means and due to bestial and instinctive tendencies and restrictions imposed by a number of factors leading to negligence, Men are negligent and forget their morality. Therefore, besides the inward perception faculty, man is in constant need of reminders from a sacred source to tread the path of guidance. The intellect and science cannot independently achieve such objectives. This shortcoming has been eliminated through Divine revelation, sent down through the medium of good-natured prophets.

According to the Holy Qur'an, one of the functions of prophethood is to remind men of their duties towards their Creator. References are to be found in the Qur'an regarding the Qur'an per se and many other sacred books (e.g. *dhikr* "remembrance"; *dhikra* "reminiscence"; *tadhkira* "reminder"; *mudhakkir* "reminder" and so forth) referring to the same issue. According to Imam 'Ali ('a), one of the objectives of sending down Divine revelation and prophethood is to remind men of forgotten

bounties and man's God-worshipping nature.[1]

The ninth shortcoming

Limitations of science and the intellect are not only claimed by us, but Westerners have also come to such a conclusion. Nowadays, postmodern thinkers criticize the rationalist and scientist orientation of the age of modernism. Basically, the advent of the postmodern trend of thought is the consequence of deficiencies in the modernist outlook and a critique of their intellectual principles; the most outstanding being extreme scientism and rationalism.

1. *Nahj al-Balagha*, the first sermon (khutba): li-yasta'du-hum mithaqa fitratih wa yudhkaru-hum mansiyya ni'mati "to ask them regarding loyalty to the covenant of nature and to remind them of the forgotten bounties." For further information see: Muhammad Taqi Mesbah, Rah va Rahnama-shenasi ["the path and knowing the guide to the path"], pp. 38-39.

The tenth shortcoming

Presently, none of the aforementioned limitations of science and the intellect have been eliminated. Dissemination of philosophical and intellectual schools and advancements in science and technology in recent centuries have not been able to eliminate their shortcomings and they still survive. Axioms have not increased quantitatively, nor have theorists presenting dubious theories provided man with guidance, nor has modern man's intellect, in the presentation of details, attained adequate and certain conclusions, nor has modern man been able to deliver himself of the influence of his emotions and inclinations by applying his intellect and science, nor have the other aforesaid limitations been removed.

One of the reasons lying behind the continuity of the above limitations, particularly in experimental sciences, is that such characteristics are related to the essence and quiddity of experimental sciences and humanities. The increase in man's experimental data does not transform its essence, but assists him to know himself further and recognize his limitations. Consequently, nowadays compared to the past, limitations of science are more evident to scientists.[1]

Advancements in intellectual and experimental sciences have not only failed in eliminating and compensating for the aforesaid weaknesses, but also, compared to the past, the need for religion is further felt. The reasons lying behind such a need are enumerated as follows:

Firstly, man's capacity to make use of science has been on the increase and further facilities have been provided for their further misuse. Therefore, compared to the past, modern age is further in need of some force to harness its power. Similarly, when man is in possession of a more robust body and more sophisticated weaponry, he will be more capable of using his power in the right and wrong directions; possession of the state-of-the-art scientific instruments and facilities presents the same risks and it is conducive to the rise of his destructiveness and constructiveness. For the same reason, the more knowledge one possesses, the more is he in need of guidance in the application of his means and facilities.

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1. The West and the damaging consequences of excessive scientism and rationalism.

Secondly, compared to the past, the path is further paved for to arouse man's passions and emotions with his bestial orientation, play with humanity, go astray, confront dilemmas, and drown in the sea of perplexity. Experimental sciences and humanities are further, and with unprecedented force, employed to achieve these goals. As a result, in such circumstances, a greater urgency is felt to guide man and save him from whirlpools and tempests.

Limitations of collective reason

At times, mention is made of collective reason and it is said that individual reason may suffer from error, but reference may be made to collective reason and thereby one may become needless of religion.

Question: Can collective reason make us needless of Divine revelation, lead us toward truth and provide us with guidance and perfection?

Answer: Collective reason in this sense is not meant to choose a superior individual for the practical administration of the government and political system, but to discover the truth. A critique of collective reason as a substitute for Divine revelation to uncover truths which individual reason is unable to do, does not contradict the necessity of making use of collective reason and opinions for the religious administrative system, since in the sphere of government and legislation, we are not necessarily in pursuit of discovering the truth, but pursue legislation and enforcement of laws, and in this regard, people possess the right to choose within the frame work of Divine law (shari'a). Emphasis is placed on reason as a substitute for religion to perceive material and immaterial dimensions of man and the world, and also to present strategies required to attain guidance and perfection.

Mentioning the limitations of individual reason does not denote rejecting the value of reason in specific cases, nor exposing the limitations of collective reason as a substitute for religion denote rejecting its effectiveness in specific cases.

Collective reason may be used in the following cases:

- The collective reason of all the people of the world throughout history.
- The collective reason of all the people of the world at a particular

time and place and in the case of a certain people.

- The collective reason of all the elite of the world throughout history.
- The collective reason of all the elite at a particular time and place and in the case of a certain people.

The first and the third cases entail the following complications:

Firstly, the consequences of the first and the third cases are not accessible, since we do not have access to the ideas of prospective generations, or those of the near and remote past. Besides, we are unaware of the ideas of future generations. In case, all the ideas of the world's wise men be taken as standards for action, it will be impossible to ignore the viewpoint of prospective generations. Based on the advancement of mankind and the awareness arising from the experience of former generations, they may attain more certain theoretical conclusions. Making our utmost efforts, we can merely be aware of the results achieved by collective reason of our predecessors and contemporaries. Thus, we do not have access to the unanimity of the wise men of the world in the past, present and future. Of course, when we said that our predecessors and contemporaries did not attain unanimity regarding any explicit and guiding issues, it would suffice to say that all men of the past, present and future are not unanimous concerning any explicit and guiding issues. In other words, contingent unanimity of prospective generations in this case may not distort the truth of the aforementioned words, since when the collective reason of predecessors and contemporaries lack such unanimity, that of future generations does not necessitate ignoring or eliminating the existent difference. The mere unanimity of future generations does not denote the unanimity of mankind throughout history.

Secondly, even if we ignore the unanimity of future generations, that of our predecessors and contemporaries is very limited and their number would be inadequate to present a comprehensive plan to guide mankind. It is impossible to actualize man's moral and social guidance through reliance on such limited issues. The evidence includes: justice, assisting the oppressed, denouncing oppression, and supporting oppressors. It is noteworthy that, despite the existence of certain common factors and explicit evidence; for e.g., the virtue of assisting the oppressed, there are

differences and ambiguities in this respect. Can we say that it is hideous to wrong anybody, even enemies and wrong-doers? The difference of further significance lies in the sense of justice and injustice. Numerous interpretations of the meaning of justice are given by different intellectual schools. Such differences have existed among thinkers and philosophers since olden times in ancient Greece, e.g. Plato and Aristotle, and also in the Middle Ages onwards. After the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment and the recent centuries, thinkers like Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Michel Walzer, presented different interpretations of justice.[1]

The second and fourth cases entail the following complications:

In case, collective reason stands for the general public or the elite of society at a particular time and place, the following complications shall arise:

Firstly, the preference of the general public or the elite over others is groundless.

Secondly, unanimity over guiding issues is quite limited and entails another complication, mentioned in the first and the third cases.

Thirdly, ideas maintained by a group of elite are not infallible and their veracity is not guaranteed. The commonly accepted ideas in a society are called axioms in logic; since they are exposed to error and uncertainty, they do not appear in the premises of arguments, but are employed in argumentation and rhetoric. Besides, axioms and commonly accepted ideas often originate from the words of the elite of society in the past and present, and they are also used in the mass media, but none of which may lead to certainty; as the elite themselves have often erred in perception and theorization. A survey of the history of human thought explicitly reveals the same, as it will be expressed further in detail.

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1. Hosayn Tavassoli, "*Mabna-ye 'Adalat dar Nazariyye-ye jan Ralz*" ["Foundations of justice in the Theory of John Rawls"], *Naq va Nazar* ["Critique and Review"(periodical)], no. 10; Rabert Nazik, "*'Adalat va Estehqaq*" ["Justice and Worthiness"], tr. Mostafa Male*Kiyan*, Naqd va Nazar, no. 10; "*Niche ya Arastu? Dar Guft o Gu ba alder Mak Intaye*r" ["Nietzsche or Aristotle? An Interview with Alder McInntyre"], tr. Gholam-Hosayn Tavakkoli, Naqd va Nazar, no. 10.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, termed as the Age of Modernism, Western scholars, impressed by past developments, emphasized the denial of religion and placed emphasis on the capacity of the intellect and senses. Consequently, Western societies developed a negative attitude toward religion. Nowadays, the plight of science has been, to some extent, revealed to Western scholars, and the negative aspects of industrialization and technology constitute the topics of arguments, and psychology and sociology of religion are respected. People's attitudes have also undergone gradual transformation. Another instance would be the fact that a considerable number of Western scholars are not adequately informed of the Islamic faith, particularly of Shi'ism, since a large number of Islamic sources, especially those pertaining to Shi'ite thought, are not available in translation. The efforts taken in this respect are rather recent. Most of Western scholars are not familiar with Persian and Arabic, nor have they access to adequate sources. Consequently, the general public in Western societies have not been able to have access to Islamic and Shi'ite thought.

Question: Can the Western scholars' and the general public's ignorance concerning Shi'ism, and particularly the negative attitude inculcated by the mass media, account for their judgment regarding Shi'ism? How can the collective reason of people in such circumstances serve as a means of accurate judgment regarding the legitimacy or the illegitimacy of Shi'ism?

The mass media which constitutes one of the most important formative factors of popular thought is a toy in the hands of its organizers. They propagate their true or untrue thoughts by employing charming means. This issue is explicitly observed in the modern world. For instance, a large number of people in Western societies regard Islam as a religion of terrorism or that of seeking violence. They depict a negative, violent, and media-enhanced picture of Imam Khomeini, who was a God fearing, and affectionate leader, but such misconceptions, more or less, still prevail.

4. PREVENTING CONTINGENT LOSSES IS ANOTHER ARGUMENT SUPPORTING THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION

Our predecessors usually raised such a discussion to provide an argument for "the necessity of attention." The term is employed as a rational necessity to avoid incurring contingent loss resulting from lack of recognition of faith, and Divinely commanded duties. Consequently, it is rationally incumbent upon man to pursue the recognition of his faith and obligations in order to avoid such contingent risk.

It seems that avoiding contingent loss can, in fact, necessitate recourse to Divine revelation. We act thoroughly upon probabilities or contingencies in this mundane world which are based on observations of the general public's lives. The practical steps taken in different hygienic, economic and social spheres are based on the same probabilities. We abstain from consuming foods by which we may incur serious harms. In case of illness, we consult efficient physicians. In none of such cases do we act upon facts, certainty or confidence. We not only abstain from certain losses, but we often act on the basis of paying attention to the avoidance of contingent loss or gaining benefits. We regard it as contingent that in case we do not study properly, we shall have an unpromising future. If we do not consult physicians or ignore medical advice, we may jeopardize out health. In all such cases, contingencies oblige us to act.

Most of our acts are based on conjectural information; avoidance of contingent loss, or seeking contingent benefits; similarly, they constitute the basis of accepting and acting upon Divinely revealed teachings. Significant typical specimens of loss and gain include those which have been revealed to us by God. Human intellect further emphasizes taking them into consideration, since in comparing the different exigencies of loss in proportion to the degree of exigency (percentage of occurrence) and exigent (percentage of the degree of loss or gain incurred or accrued by occurrence), further avoidance should be exercised wherever the product happens to be higher. For instance, in case two different perilous routes exist for a single journey and the exigency of encountering

highwaymen is twenty percent, but traversing one entails armed robbers and murderers and treading the other necessitates confronting robbers who merely rob travelers, the intellect requires the avoidance of the former option.

Both strong exigency and exigent lie in the losses and gains foretold by Divine revelation. In incurring material loss, we heed the information supplied by the general public. For instance, in case we happen to go on a nightly journey and a number of citizens warn us against the danger of confronting highwaymen, we alter our course. Similarly, regarding life in this world and the world to come, Divine revelation provides us with information about risks and benefits, including the existence of God and the other world and also the benefits and losses accrued from or incurred by them. There is a strong probability in this regard, since, besides proofs provided by the intellect, such probability is imparted to us by the most immaculate men and the most honest imparters of information, such as prophets, imams and saints. If, in our daily lives, we take the information provided by the general public into consideration, how can we ignore the information imparted to us by the Infallibles such as the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali? Besides, despite minor differences, the consensus of the followers of Divine religions, whose number amounts to hundreds of millions, regarding the existence of God and the next world, makes such exigency stronger. Regarding the exigency of such risks, the exigent is worth considering; since on the one side, there is everlasting chastisement, pain and torment in the fire, and on the other side, lies indescribable and ideal serenity, and welfare in paradise.

5. DR. SOROUSH'S CLAIM: MODERN MAN DOES NOT NEED RELIGION

In an article entitled "The root is in water,"[1] he raised a discussion on the "admirable and reproachable needlessness of religion." He later added further points to expound the topic in his speech delivered in Montreal, Canada.[2] The present chapter is devoted to expound his claim of needlessness of religion.

Exposition of the theory

Dr. Soroush raises a question concerning the course taken by mankind in history. In his words, "This is the question: in case we take all mankind into consideration and place their good deeds and merits on one scale and all the vices and evil deeds and demerits on the other, which scale will be heavier?"[3] His reply leads to the conclusion that history has proceeded in a positive direction toward piety and religious devotion, the prophets have succeeded in their endeavors, and the substance of prophetic teachings has been firmly established. Following an exposition of the positive development in man's history of piety and religious devotion and raising the claim of needlessness of religion, he avoids the probable critique of his viewpoint, by attempting to answer such questions which may be raised by readers regarding the development of piety: In case, piety has been further established in the history of man's development, parallel to the developments in history, how is it said that the Western world has entered the Age of Secularism? He states: "Secularism signifies ignoring religion in all mundane spheres; creating social institutions regardless of religious values, commands and warnings,

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1. *Kiyan* (periodical), issue no. 29.

2. Dr. Soroush, his lecture and the pursuant questions and answers session held at 25-12-1367 (1988-04-15) at Fatemiyyeh (sa) Mosque in Montreal, Canada. The cases alluded to in the course of the chapter is mainly relevant to the session in question.

3. *Kiyan*, 29, p. 2.

positively and negatively; lack of hostile confrontation against it; explicit heresy and the intention to eradicate it."[1]

Following an allusion to the meaning of secularism, he explicitly makes reference to modern man's needlessness of prophetic teachings and states: "What is obvious is mankind's needlessness of prophets and their teachings, revealing that it is as if the relation between men and prophetic teachings has transformed, and the former domination of prophetic teachings over men has grown more feeble."[2]

It sounds surprising to claim needlessness of religion in a country in which people's hearts are imbued with the love for religion and the Holy Qur'an. Such claims may lead to offending believers. Thus he proceeds: "At times, it preoccupies the mind and one may surmise that the time for true belief in religion has passed, the prophets have turned into the oppressed, and they are abandoned in history." If indeed man has happened to have passed the times of firm belief and has arrived at the times of indifference regarding prophetic teachings, if he claims needlessness of them in theory and practice, it may be judged that prophets have left the arena, their triumph has come to an end, and at the time being, the oppressed have failed to fulfill their wishes; the vanquished have confronted their evil end and they have been marginalized in history, and the affairs are in the hands of other masters.[3]

Consequently, after raising the question of needlessness of religion, he attempts to dispel the doubts and preoccupations entertained by believers by dividing the needlessness into two types, *admirable* and *reproachable*, and proceeds with the statement that modern man's needlessness of religion is of the former type, rather than the latter. Thus he elaborates on the two types of needlessness: "The point of significance lies in the sense of the term *needlessness* and the significance lies in paying attention to the point. Two senses and two types of needlessness may be taken into consideration: *admirable* and *reproachable* needlessness. The admirableness or the reproachableness of needlessness lies in the relation established between the seeker and the sought. It is to be noted that the

1. *Ibid.* p. 12.

2. Loc. Cit.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

establishment of a number of such relations basically serve to negate them. Imagine the relation between the physician and the patient. On the one hand, there exist non-physician patients and on the other, there are non-patient physicians. In case the relation happens to be not based on affection, the physician will attempt to establish the relationship on firmer grounds, i.e. he will try to prolong the treatment unnecessarily and keep the patient sick for ever. Now if there happens to be affection, all the physician's attempts will be directed towards the patient's treatment which equal negate the former relation and make the patient needless of the physician. In other words, the affectionate physician's attempts are directed toward ending the relation between the two, rather than preserve it. The relation between the teacher and the student is of a like nature. In the establishment of such relations, the teacher basically aims at promoting the status of the student and making him equal to himself, so that the student may become needless of him. … But *reproachable* needlessness is basically of a different nature: the patient or the student does not tread the right path by paying attention to the teacher or physician and, thereby, makes no use of them, despite ignorance, sickness, and poverty. On the contrary, the former type of needlessness is not *reproachable*, but it is quite *admirable*."[1]

As a consequence, the patient's needlessness of the physician after his recovery and the student's needlessness of the teacher following graduation or a teaching position are of an admirable nature. A claim to needlessness of the physician by the patient, and that of the student who has not learned enough from his teacher and guide may be considered to be reproachable. The patient is in need of the physician as long as he is sick but after his recovery, he does not require the physician's services any further. The student's need for his teacher is of the same nature.

He concludes by saying that man's needlessness is of the *admirable* type.[2]

It goes without saying that his claim regarding modern man's needlessness of religion includes needlessness of Islam as well. Special emphasis is placed on needlessness of Islam, since most of his audience are Muslims who believe in the necessity of following the teachings of

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1. *Ibid.*, no. 29, p. 13.

2. *Ibid.* p. 13, where he says: "Now to make a judgment…".

Islam. Besides, Islam is not even once excluded from his discussion. To establish his viewpoint, he cites Qur'anic verses and traditions.[1]

Based on the aforementioned points, the said author's discussion on needlessness of religion includes Islam, and our main discussion is about Islam. Therefore, the terms "*Islam*" and "*religion*" shall be employed synonymously in this section.

Description or judgment

Is Dr. Soroush making attempts toward description or judgment? It is to be noted that at times, we intend to describe modern societies, particularly western countries and the manner of interaction between science and religion in such societies. For instance, explanations are provided for their scientific and industrial advancements. In describing the historical facts happening in the West, their conjecture that scientific advancements have led to their needlessness of religion is mentioned. Such remarks are made at the price of ignoring the fact that Western societies have incurred damages from Christianity, the Church, and also from not knowing the Islamic faith. At times, besides providing a description of Western societies, judgments are made regarding them. We intend to answer the following questions:

- Has the West, in its encounter with religion, proceeded on the right path?
- Is the viewpoint of a number of thinkers belonging to secular societies, based on the needlessness of religion, accurate and acceptable?
- Can it be claimed that generally speaking, man's need for perceiving religious teachings has come to an end?

It may be inferred from the material provided by the author that he is not merely trying to provide a historical description of the relationship between mankind and religion, particularly modern man's encounter with religion, but he is further endeavoring to pass judgment and confirm the interconnection between scientific advancement and needlessness of religion. It is clearly reflected in the following statements:

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1. Cf. the chapter entitled "Citation of Qur'anic verses and traditions."

At the outset, he mentions the rise of modern science;[1] then he intends to answer the question whether man is in need of religion despite advancement in the modern world. In this regard, he states: "What is clear is man's needlessness of prophets and their teachings."[2] He does not state that it is modern man's conjecture that in the light of scientific advancement, he has attained needlessness of religion, but emphasizes real and obvious needlessness.

After raising the claim of needlessness of religion, it is suggested that such a claim may disturb believers.[3] Referring to the doubt and the manner by which he provides his answer indicates real and appropriate needlessness, since, inappropriate needlessness will not sound new to many a believer nor disturb them. The reason is that conjecture of needlessness of religion traces back to the rise of Renaissance and the growth of experimental sciences in the West. It is to be mentioned that in different eras from the Renaissance onwards, such a trend has experienced fluctuations as well.

Judgments are passed concerning modern man and no doubts are entertained regarding needlessness of religion, but it is considered as certain and indisputable. As a consequence, attempt is merely made regarding the manner of its exposition, stating: "Now, concerning passing judgments regarding modern societies, we are supposed to distinguish between the two types of needlessness and consider the grounds by which modern man does not require prophetic teachings."[4]

His judgment concerning modern man is that they have become needless of religion and their needlessness is *admirable*. According to him, prophetic teachings are so established for people that they have turned into certainties or self-evident truths.

Arguments substantiating needlessness of religion.

What are the arguments given by the proponents of the theory of needlessness of religion? There are no coherent and systematic

1. *Kiyan* (periodical), no. 29, p. 12.
2. *Ibid.* p. 12.
3. *Ibid.* pp. 12-13.
4. *Ibid.* p. 13.

arguments, however, he attempts to substantiate his theory through the following arguments:

Man's intellectual and scientific advancement Presents a specific standard for needlessness

Cites Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions

States teachings have turned into indisputable facts

Concludes that Prophets' success necessitates modern man's needlessness of religion

Following the clarification of the two types of needlessness, he proceeds to specify the type, stating: "Now in passing judgment concerning modern societies, we are supposed to consider the distinction between the two types of needlessness and reflect on the grounds for modern man's needlessness of prophetic teachings. Is it due to the fact that prophetic teachings are so firmly established in the minds that they have turned into indisputable facts and they are accepted without requiring spiritual guidance. Modern man is born with such teachings, lives by them and breathes in such atmosphere. Or is it due to the fact that, despite poverty and ignorance, man is indifferent toward them through enmity, godlessness, and opposition toward the Divine? If the latter happens to be the case, there will remain no other alternative but to rue and regret the prophets' failure, but the fact is otherwise."[1]

In replying to the question whether modern societies' needlessness of religion is of *reproachable* or *admirable* type, he remarks: "If the latter happens to be the case, there would remain no other alternative but to rue and regret prophets' failure, but the fact is otherwise."[2]

In other words, if we do not say that *admirable* needlessness of religion is the case, it will necessitate prophets' failure and uselessness of their efforts. But the fact is that prophets' failure is unacceptable; consequently, it is to be concluded that needlessness is the case. Therefore, prophets' success necessitates modern man's needlessness of religion. Thus he concludes that prophetic teachings are so firmly

1. Loc.cit.

2. Loc.cit.

established in the minds that they have turned into indisputable facts, with which man is born, lives, and breathes in such atmosphere.

Evaluation

–The first problem

The author's claim of prophetic teachings being indisputable for modern man is incomplete. How can such a claim be accepted? Religious teachings cannot be indisputable for people and make them needless of such teachings. As long as one has not learned the primary and secondary articles of faith, he is ignorant of them. As a consequence, everyone is in need of learning. Nobody's learning may lead to other people's needlessness of learning. Whoever learns something, the point is clarified to him and such clarification does not enter other people's minds, unless they receive education as well. Besides, one may not attain clarity through learning. The term *indisputable* is employed to signify what is not in need of reasoning, as it is clearly perceived by everybody. Such perception does not require reflection, such as, assertion of the difference between days and nights, or the fact that two multiplied by two equals four. If Islamic teachings happen to be quite clear to people, they do not require education, but the problem lies in the fact that such a claim is not acceptable. All Islamic commands are not clear to such an extent. Many Islamic teachings are based on intellectual and scientific reasoning, some of which may be perceived through reflection, reasoning, and in cases, by making use of results produced by human sciences.

The philosophy of such religious teachings is established through the reflections of intellectuals, and as such, they are not axiomatic or self-evident to everybody. A number of commands also lie beyond human intellect and comprehension, and as a consequence, they may not be perceived through the application of experimental sciences.

–The second problem

The prophets' standard of success is not their self-evident teachings to mankind, thus the contrary might necessitate their decisive failure. To consider the prophets' triumph or defeat, the goals of their missions are to be taken into account as well. They aimed at

imparting the Divine message to the people of the world, guiding them to spiritual perfection and following Divine commands, and they took great

steps in both spheres.

Prophetic missions aimed at liberating mankind from the bondage of authorities other than God, establishing the link between Bountiful God and mankind, and also guiding men toward spiritual growth and attaining moral virtues.

Prophets further aimed at practical objectives rather than scientific goals, they intended to drive mankind to move toward God. The prophets' objective was to make all men, through their missions, proceed on the path toward God as best as possible in all their individual and social spheres of life for good.

Prophets intended to guide a creature who was created willful, capable of choosing guidance or misguidance. The intellect and thought, together with will and volition, are Divine bounties, bestowed on mankind from among different creatures, distinguishing him from animals and angels. The same will necessitates weighing human acts on the Divine scales of justice. The proper application of such bounties enables man to be worthy of receiving the bounties of Divine and human virtues and growth, as its misuse shall entail everlasting loss, as it is emphasized many a time in the Holy Qur'an. Regarding the same point, it may be said that the standard of their success is proportionate to the manner of impressing such a willful creature and directing him in his thoughts and acts.

On the same basis, we notice that prophets, in their times and thereafter, have achieved great success and have greatly impressed mankind. For instance, the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) was able, thanks to Divine Grace, to open a new chapter in the dark pages of Arab paganism, bestow everlasting life on men at that time, and make that era serve as a guide to the coming generations. It would suffice to take a glance at the great reformers in history to notice prophets' success in this respect. Different historiographers have emphasized prophets' outstanding role, particularly that of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ).

Prophets have elevated stations of innumerable people from lowly states to the zenith of grandeur in their own times and thereafter. The number of Muslims in the last fourteen centuries has been on the rise and history has witnessed the conversion of innumerable ordinary people and also many scholars to the Islamic faith. They have made the light of Islam shine on their lives and can serve as examples of the success achieved by the

Prophet of Islam (ṣ). Why is it that, despite the ever increasing scientific advancement, the rise of different schools of thought, a host of enthusiastic converts turn to embrace the Islamic faith?

Attempts have been made by the global powers' with their political and financial support to depict a dark picture of the pure visage of the Islamic faith and generate pessimism against it for the inhabitants of the globe and provide them with alternatives of other religions. Besides, the regimes of a large number of Muslim countries bear animosity against the dissemination of real Islam in the world.

In such circumstances, the rise in the number of converts to the Islamic faith merely reveals the success achieved by the faith and its original disseminators. The rise and continuity of the Islamic revolution in Iran, despite its entanglements with dilemmas, may also be regarded as the fruit of the flourishing of the Islamic faith in modern times and may serve as an example of success attained by its original founders who inspired such an Islamic movement.

One of the prophets' fundamental objectives was teaching moral virtues and reviving them in societies. Dissemination of such Divine and sacred teachings plays an important role in keeping individuals and societies away from depravity and corruption and assist them in attaining spiritual perfection. Prophets played an impressive role and achieved great success in this respect in the history of human life.

Modern man, as in the past, is entangled in the snare of ignorance and is in need of teachings emanating from the Divine source.

–The third problem

If the only reason behind prophets' success be regarded as the self-evidence of their teachings to men, it will necessitate the failure of all the prophets, including the Prophet of Islam (ṣ), in their own times. Emphasizing the issue that modern man, having advanced in science, has attained a state where Islamic teachings have become self-evident to him, will mean a lack of such attainment prior to modernism. The self-evidence of prophetic teachings and needlessness of religion were not actualized in the time of the prophets, even that of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) as the last prophet in the chain of prophethood. In this case, one should conclude that all prophets suffered final defeat in their time and

did not attain any degree of success, since people in former times failed to regard religious teachings as self-evident. Therefore, if one regards the self-evidence of prophetic teachings as the sole standard for their success and thinks of some solution for the dilemma of their failure, he should revise the theory of modern man's needlessness of religion, rather than commit himself to the same theory.

Presenting a specific standard for needlessness.

Presenting a particular standard of piety is the basis of proving man's needlessness of religion. The standard is not clearly stated in the article entitled "The root is in water," but by referring to his views concerning *essential* and *accidental* in religion[1] and a number of issues raised by him in his lecture in Canada,[2] may contribute to its clarification. In answering the questions raised at the end of the said lecture, he expounded the standard for attaining the stage of *admirable* needlessness of Islam or any faith. The reader's attention is directed to selections of his statements. His answer to the present author's question regarding *admirable* needlessness includes:

Dr. Soroush: We encounter the same point within the same framework in prophetic missions; a prophet may be appointed to his prophetic mission [and] his nation may attain *admirable* needlessness. It is not surprising. … [As I humbly mentioned, the discussion was based on the minor premise. To you, has it happened or not? Has the world attained the stage of needlessness of religion?] That is all you say. It is not very important. Put the case that it happened, would there be anything wrong with it?

Question: No, by no means. It would have been so good. If the entire world, including the people of the Western and Eastern countries, were like the Prophet of the Islamic faith and acted according to all Divine

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1. Cf. Sajedi, Abu 'l-Fadl, "Chalesh ya sazesh "challenge or compromise," chapter one.

2. Dr. Soroush, lecture, questions and answers session, dated 15 March, 1998, held at Fatima (sa) Mosque in Montreal, Canada. It is to be noted that, due to shortage of time and the great number of questions, the present author had to raise one single question concerning admirable and reproachable needlessness of religion. Dr. Soroush's remarks are precisely quoted herein. The words in parenthesis are added by the present author in order to establish nexus among the sentences and or his explanations.

commands, we would have the best society. There was no need for prophetic teachings, since the fruit of their struggle would already be in hand.

Dr. Soroush: Now put the case that [in the present] nowhere in the world is like that and men are primitive idolaters. What I am driving at is whether we would not be content if man attained such a state? [It is evident that we should be content.] It is excellent and serves as the token of the prophets' success. Now if somebody told you that a number of societies were like that, would you be discontented because of it? [No] You are expected to be satisfied. You may only say that unfortunately, it is not the case; otherwise, there would be nothing to worry about. My remarks are not against religion. So, we are not engaged in a religious discussion. It is merely a social discussion regarding whether a number of societies have attained such a state or not.

Question: I do not disagree with you concerning the definitions of the terms *admirable* and *reproachable* needlessness. [The main problem lies somewhere else.] The discussion is whether nowadays, the different countries of the world, such as Iran, the Western and Eastern countries have attained the needlessness of traditions, the Qur'anic message, or Islam as a religion, or a religious body with respect to its diverse dimensions, such as, devotional and social issues? If so, what is the attained percentage?

Dr. Soroush: Yes, this is your question. So, religious issues do not concern us here. In religious terms, *admirable* needlessness is not bad; rather, it is something good. If people have failed to attain to it, we are sorry that they have not. I wish they had. … So, you agree that *admirable* needlessness is not contrary to religion. It would be quite good to achieve it. But we are afraid to say that, as you put it, a number of societies have failed to achieve it [i.e. the stage of admirable needlessness]. Well, now I would like to answer this question. I see the problematic issue in the religious thought, which is in the mind as well. You think that by religion, Islamic law (*fiqh*) is meant. You say[1] there is no religion when

1 It is to be mentioned that while asking the question, emphasis had been put on the issue that the only standards for keeping one's faith was not to perform daily prayers and fast during the month of Ramadan.

people do not perform their daily prayers. If [people] do not fast, if they drink wine [there is no faith]. That is the way you think. If this is the issue [i.e. if they are considered as standards for piety], I agree with you [i.e. modern man is not needless of religion]. But I do not regard religion in such a manner. That is the problematic issue regarding our thinking in our society. This manner of thought has descended from the top of the hierarchy. I put the blame on the intellectual leaders. According to them, religion equals the Islamic law (*fiqh*). They consider the society to be religious, if its members observe the Islamic dress code (hijab). When people in Western societies do not follow the Islamic dress code, it is said that they have not attained the needlessness of prophetic teachings. The prophet is supposed to tell them to follow the dress code. I agree with you regarding this standard [i.e. if we accept the authenticity of your standard] [admirable] needlessness has not been achieved. But I do not agree to your standard, I have an issue to raise in this respect. … You know, if we agree on the fundamentals [there will be no issue between us, since] those [fundamentals] are of prime importance. The pivot of my discussion lies in admirable and reproachable needlessness. Firstly, it would be great that a society attained to admirable needlessness. Secondly, there is a standard for attaining to *admirable* needlessness. Beating one's chest [as a part of the mourning ritual], organizing a gathering to remember the martyrs of Karbala, or going on pilgrimage to Mecca and the holy shrines may not serve as standards. None of them may be considered as standards for piety. The standard is the value of people's honor and good name in that society.

Summary of the argument

The material included in the exposition of the standard for *admirable* needlessness of Islamic teachings may be summarized in three premises and a conclusion:

The first premise: Division of needlessness into the admirable and reproachable is true for Islamic teachings as well. Besides, it would be excellent and desirable that a society attained the stage of admirable needlessness of traditions and Qur'anic teachings.

The second premise: The standard for society's admirable needlessness of Islamic teachings is the establishment of the essence of Islamic teachings in society. The essence of Islamic teachings includes belief in propositions such as: man is a respectable creature; it is necessary to

protect other people's honor and good name; freedom of mankind is to be respected; justice and its administration are good. The last statement, quoted herein from his remarks, clearly indicate the first two premises.

The third premise: The essence of Islamic teachings [i.e. the concepts and the propositions mentioned in the second premise] has become self-evident for modern man. The self-evidence of the essence of prophetic teachings for modern man is taken for granted. He states: "My discussion concerns prophetic teachings. Can it be said that the essence of prophetic teachings, maintaining that man is to be respected, have turned into an indisputable fact?"[1] In anther instance, he remarks: "It is quite self-evident to me that basic prophetic teachings, i.e. the essence of their thoughts, lack any opponent or any serious opponent."[2] To confirm his theory, which is based on modern man's needlessness of religion, he writes: "The issue is that prophetic teachings have been firmly established in the historical mentality of mankind."[3] He illustrates the self-evidence of moral virtues and mentions justice and its administration. In the meantime, such illustrations indicate that by the self-evidence of the value of moral virtues, he means the self-evidence of the essence of Islamic teachings.

Conclusion: Modern man (inhabiting in societies for whose members the said propositions have become self-evident) has attained needlessness of religion.

Here, he repeats his claim: "What may be clearly noticed is man's needlessness of prophets and their teachings."[4] There, he attributed needlessness of religion to mankind, but here, emphasis is further put on *modern society* and *modern man,* and they are regarded as having attained such a station.

Evaluation of the first premise

The authenticity of his argument lies in the authenticity of the three premises, whereas the second premise is fallacious, consequently his

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1. Dr. Soroush, lecture, questions and answers session dated 15 March, 1998, held at Fatima (sa) Mosque in Montreal, Canada.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Kiyan* (periodical), no. 29, p. 14.

4. *Ibid.* p. 12.

conclusion is fallacious. Besides, parts of the first premise seem to be unacceptable.

In the premise, he states: "The division of needlessness into the twain types of admirable and reproachable comes true regarding Islamic teachings. Besides, it would be a desideratum that a society attains the admirable needlessness of traditions and Qur'anic teachings."

Concerning this premise, it may be stated that the principle division of needlessness into the two types of admirable and reproachable is authentic, since the instances for the two types of needlessness is quite evident in the relations between the student and the teacher or the one between the patient and the physician. Such needlessness may be actualized in the cases of the student and the physician, but needlessness of religion, though it is perceptible, its actualization sounds impossible, since the argument behind needlessness of Islamic teachings may include one of the following, none of which are acceptable:

One: its complete establishment and self-evidence in the mind. The needlessness of Islamic teachings is unacceptable for the same reason (their self-evidence to modern man).[1]

Two: the complete acquisition of Islamic teachings. If all religious teachings are not self-evident, but a number of individuals have acquired them and have committed them to memory, they do not require further acquisition. Such argument is unacceptable, since it is evident that all the people of the world have not learned such teachings. It is not true concerning the inhabitants of the areas populated by Muslims, let alone the inhabitants of non-Muslim lands.

Evaluation of the second premise

The fundamental need is to provide a specific standard for piety, as mentioned in the second premise. In this premise, the origin of needlessness is considered to be the self-evidence of the essence of religious teachings (i.e. the value of justice, protection of the honor and good name of individuals, and so on). It is necessary to pay attention to a number of points prior to the presentation of the critique:

By essence of the Islamic faith, the said theorist means its essentials

1. The point was expounded in the critique of the first argument.

contrasted with its accidents. Reading his article entitled "Essential and accidental in religion," reveals that by "gowhar-e din", he means "dhati-ye din" ("essential to religion") and at times he employs them interchangeably. For instance, following a detailed exposition of religious accidents and the necessity of distinguishing them from essentials, he summarizes his ideas: "The fourteen points … are the same as those excellent accidents which conceal the invaluable essence of religion and in order to discover the essence, there shall be no other alternative but to split the crust."[1] The terms "gowhar" and "dhat" are employed synonymously in these passages. In addition to "gowhar," he has employed other terms synonymous with the essence of Islam, such as "pure and naked Islam,"[2] "the main message and the nucleus of Islam."[3] He holds that all these terms share the same referent, by which, he means the essential or true Islam, i.e. Islam excluding its accidents.[4]

The second premise reveals that by the essence of religion, he means moral self-evident concepts such as justice and respect for man. However, he does not claim that self-evidence of such concepts may render man needless of the acquisition of such concepts, but maintains that it is the origin of needlessness of all Islamic teachings.

While asking various questions (some of which are included herein) the present author emphasized that by putting emphasis on performing daily prayers, fasting, observing the Islamic dress code, and a number of other religious requirements, he did not intend to claim that the mere performance and observance of such acts were the most important standards for a religious society, as for instance, if a number of people contented themselves with inattentive performance of daily prayers, they

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1. *Ibid.* p. 18.

2. *Ibid.* no. 42, p. 13.

3. *Ibid.* p. 14.

4. For further details, see Sajedi, *Chalesh ya sazesh* ("Challenge or conspiracy"), Section one: Essential and accidental in religion. The section opens with the meaning of essential and accidental in religion from Dr. Soroush's viewpoint and its requirements. The material incorporated in section one reveals that he distinguishes accidentals from the true Islam (which is considered by him as the essence of Islam).

might not be the best of the pious, compared to other people,[1] but the question to be raised is whether it is possible to consider certain requirements for believing in the Islamic faith. The points raised in questioning the said theorist by the present author includes the following:

"It is not claimed that belief in the Islamic faith shall merely depend on performing daily prayers, particularly those performed inattentively. Any individual or society that establishes them is considered to be Muslim, otherwise they will be regarded as unbelievers, even if they happen to be good. The present writer does not say that belief in the Islamic faith is restricted to such outward practice, but he means that religion introduces certain preliminaries by whose performance and observance, man may attain to higher stations. Belief in the Islamic faith has certain degrees. There are the lowest and the highest degrees in the hierarchy. There exist minimum requirements for a Muslim, without which one may not be regarded as a Muslim. Therefore, the other side is not to be accused of stating that being a Muslim lies merely in the inattentive performance of daily prayers. On the basis of such premise, we may raise a point. Put the case that there is a society whose members are disbelievers. Corruption, prostitution, non-observance of the Islamic dress code, drinking alcoholic drinks and promiscuity are common in it. Its members do not establish daily prayers, nor do they fast, nor act upon religious commands. Is it incumbent upon us to guide this society, attempt to convert them to the Islamic faith, and encourage them to act upon the Islamic commands?[2]

Taking the aforementioned points into consideration, we evaluate his

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1. It is to be noted that the attentive performance of daily prayers with due observance of the relevant requirements plays a very significant role in diminishing corruption and immoral acts in society; as the same role is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an (29:45):

﴿ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ ٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَٱلْمُنكَرِ﴾

"Performance of daily prayers prevents from perpetrating unlawful and wicked acts." Needless to say that the objective of the present work is not the presentation of such discussion. The value of the performance of daily prayers for the modern man requires another discussion.

2. Dr. Soroush, lecture, questions and answers session dated 15 March, 1998, held at Fatima (sa) Mosque in Montreal, Canada.

second premise, in which he states that the society for whose members, concepts such as the value of justice, its administration, and respecting the individual's honor and good name are self-evident, is needless of the acquisition of Islamic teachings. By this, he may either mean one of the two fallacious statements:

When such concepts become self-evident for a society or individual, other necessary commands and beliefs of the Islamic faith become self-evident. If the said theorist means the same, its fallacy is quite self-evident, since the self-evidence of the value of justice may never lead to the self-evidence of other Islamic teachings for the individual. One may encounter a Western or Eastern society, ignorant of Islamic teachings, but believing in concepts such as justice and its administration, and pose a question to its members regarding the necessity of establishing daily prayers, fasting, and the manner of their performance, and learn about their total ignorance of such teachings. Apparently, the said theorist does not mean this case, but the following.

In case, he means that the self-evidence of concepts such as the value of justice and its administration renders man needless of other Islamic teachings, one may say that the essence of the Islamic faith lies in the same concepts, and other Islamic commands and precepts are not of the same significance as they may be excluded or substituted. In fact he means that the essentials of Islamic teachings are the same moral concepts which have become self-evident to modern man. Therefore, there is no need for religion any longer.

Such a theory is fallacious, since it suffers from the following problems:

The first problem

Religion is not supposed to teach man that promoting justice, acquiring Divine attributes, and approaching Him are good and doing wrong is evil, since such propositions are axiomatic and specimens of the practical intellect's commands. Divine revelation aims at assisting human intellect theoretically, indicating specific approaches to attain the essence, and on the practical level, fan his inward flames of faith as a meritorious incentive to act in this direction. Limitations of human intellect and science, and also shortcomings of human epistemic means employed for perceiving the details of the path to guidance and attaining the essence of religion were mentioned above. To make use of Divine revelation is to

use the expertise of an expert who is totally aware of dimensions, approaches and factors which are of significance in attaining the essence of justice, devotion and guidance. Self-evidence of the value of the essence of religion may not render us needless of understanding the manners of actualization of the essence. If the Islamic devotional, moral, and social commands are acted upon, man shall be respected, the fragrance of justice shall be in the air, and Divine attributes shall prevail in life. The similitude of Mr. Soroush's theory is that if somebody understood the value of specializing in cardio-vascular diseases, there would be no need to study medicine, since he would have sufficient knowledge to treat such patients. It is evident that such claim is fallacious. The self-evidence of the value of specializing in cardio-vascular failures may not turn someone into a specialist in that field of study. Islam indicates practical approaches to actualize this ideal through specific commands.

The second problem

The said author tries to prove modern man's needlessness of religion. However, his remarks exceed such needlessness as it necessitates that of the predecessors and stands in contradiction to prophetic missions and the Scripture. If he happens to be right in stating that the reason lying behind the appointment of prophets to their missions was to teach man self-evident moral concepts, such concepts are neither required for modern man nor those living in the Middle Ages, since such concepts have always been self-evident to man. Consulting Plato's (427-347 BCE) *Republic,* and Aristotle's (384-322 BCE) *Nicomachean Ethics* attests the same point. The same is true with the Islamic times. Formerly, such concepts were believed to be of value. The self-evidence of such concepts is not merely known to modern man as a result of modern scientific advancements. Reasonable man is created in a fashion that he may comprehend moral axiomatic propositions. If you go to the remotest village in Iran and ask an illiterate man whether justice or injustice is good, what answer will you receive? Will he prefer injustice to justice? Does modern man merely perceive the good of justice? Even a child, prior to receiving religious education, may complain if he notices that his parents treat children unjustly and unfairly.

Such issues are regarded as the intelligible of practical reason and they

are shared by all humanity. Predecessors could be needless of religion in the same manner as modern men. Consequently, the said author's statement necessitates the futility of prophetic missions by assuming that all they were supposed to do was teach axiomatic propositions. Besides, appointing numerous prophets with new Scriptures was futile. The utmost duty of the following prophets was to reiterate and remind people of the material imparted by the first prophet, so needless of bringing a new Book.

Besides, the said theory makes all the prophetic missions futile on the part of God, and the prophetic endeavors useless, including the struggles of the last one of them [Mohammad (ṣ)]. Instead of undergoing innumerable unbearable troubles and risking his life many a time for teaching religious precepts and providing the society with Islamic guidance, it would be better if the prophet had asked people regarding the good or evil of justice. If people confirmed the good of justice, he could perceive that they were needless of Islamic teachings. There was no need for the prophet even to ask people regarding the good of justice, as the value of justice is self-evident to anybody.

In like manner, according to the same theory, the infallible Imams' troubles in the exposition of Islamic commands and the transmission of traditions to Muslims, particularly in the times of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (ʻa) and Imam Jaʻfar al-Sadiq (ʻa), encouraging their disciples to preserve these traditions and transmit them to the coming generations, tolerating confinements and martyrdoms for the same end, religious scholars' struggles throughout the vicissitudes of the history of the Shiʻa for the collection and preservation of such traditions against the damages done by the Imams' enemies have been all in vain. They could tread an easier path instead of engage in an array of troubles and hardships, they could pause for a moment to notice if people were aware of the virtue of justice and the vice of injustice. If the Imams were completely aware of such issues (certainly they were), they were able to recognize the fact that such people were needless of perceiving other Islamic teachings.

The third problem

Limiting the primary and the secondary articles of faith to a number of moral self-evident propositions shall deny many a religious duty and the obligation to act upon them. This issue stands in contradiction to the Holy Qur'an and the traditions narrated from the Prophet (ṣ) and the infallible Imams. Numerous Qur'anic verses emphasize religious duties such as performing salat (prayers), zakaat (poor-due), saum (fast), and acting upon other religious duties and abstaining from unlawful acts. There are also many traditions narrated to the same effect. If one claims that the people of a certain society regard the necessity of other people's honor and good name and also the realization of social justice as self-evident, it may be said that they have taken a step closer towards the society ideal to prophets, but it is untrue to say that such a society is needless of perceiving the other Islamic teachings, since it has attained to admirable needlessness, such a viewpoint necessitates no need to believe in Islamic duties and act upon them. In other words, he is saying that it is possible to be a good Muslim and at the same time abstain from establishing the prayer (salat), fast (saum), and perform other duties or commit unlawful acts (e.g. drink wine, abandon the Islamic dress code) or deny the existence of God, Prophethood, Imamate, and resurrection, since:

He takes it for granted that an individual or society becomes needless of other Islamic teachings through acknowledging moral self-evident propositions. The obvious consequence of such an assumption is needlessness of perception and belief in the unity of God, prophetic missions, resurrection, and the secondary articles of faith.

It shall not be necessary to perform the duties in such circumstances, since acting upon the command is secondary to its knowledge. When the self-evidence of moral concepts causes the individual and the society to attain to admirable needlessness of Islamic teachings, there shall be no need to perceive Islamic teachings and act upon them, since in case one is not aware of a command, he shall not be able to act upon it, and the necessity of acting upon an unknown command shall be regarded as a duty beyond the capacity of the obliged and it would be unbecoming of God to make it obligatory to act upon an unknown command.

In other words, the said theory necessitates that performing a Divinely

ordained duty, attaining salvation in this world and the world to come, will result in traversing a short path which leads to needlessness of accepting the primary articles of faith and acting upon the secondary ones. That path is causing concepts such as justice to become self-evident. When the value of such concepts becomes self-evident to somebody, he shall be exempt from acting upon them.

The fourth problem

The said theory provides specimens for the ideas of those who believe in a number of the verses of the Holy Qur'an and disbelieve in others, since the said author accepts the moral self-evident propositions and leaves the rest aside, as God says in the Holy Qur'an: *"Then do you believe in a part of the Scripture and reject the rest? Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be consigned to the most grievous torment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."*[1] The occasion of sending down this verse was regarding those people of the Book who merely believed in a part of it, but the verse obviously indicates that the command includes the Holy Qur'an as well. When the abandonment of a number of the verses of other scriptures is forbidden and it arouses God's Wrath, such act regarding the verses of the Holy Qur'an shall be forbidden and shall even entail His Wrath more severely.

The said author has ignored the interconnectedness of Islamic teachings. Islam is a doctrine possessing limbs and organs like the human body. Man is physically sound and healthy when all the limbs and organs of his body are sound. The limbs and organs may not be individually as efficient as the whole of the body. Undoubtedly, a number of limbs and organs are superior to others, for instance, compared to fingers, the head and heart play a more important role, since the severance of the head results in the loss of human life, but the severance of a finger does not lead to death. In like manner, a number of Islamic commands are of more

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1. 2:85

﴿أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْىٌ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَشَدِّ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

importance. Placing emphasis on one dimension and ignoring another shall lead to distortions in the Islamic religion.

Islamic commands have been legislated for individual as well as social interests. As expressed by a number of Muslim thinkers, Divine commands are subject to the essential good and evil of acts. Consequently, God Almighty has rendered a number of acts as obligatory or recommended them in accordance with the good derived by committing them. Likewise, the evil derived from committing certain acts has led to their being regarded as forbidden or disapproved. However, all the good and evil derived from committing certain acts may not be obvious to us. All the good which is Divinely considered for man may not be actualized through the mere self-evidence of a number of Divine Commands, but the actualization may occur through recognizing and acting upon all such Commands and thus attain exaltation. The holistic outlook requires that perceiving and performing a number of duties does not render us needless of perceiving and performing others. Having respect for others does not render us needless of our daily and nightly prayers. If our devotions are properly perceived and performed, besides maintaining a spiritual connection with God, continuity of His remembrance, and spiritual growth, they will entail worldly and social consequences and assist in the establishment of desirable social relations.

Citation of the Qur'anic verses and traditions

To express the *admirable* needlessness of religion, the said author seeks assistance from the Qur'anic verses and traditions, but he does not specify whether such evidence serve as the main reason for the authenticity of his claim or it is assumed to be independent, but it may be said that through such evidence, he intends to substantiate his viewpoint. The reason is that in order to prove the claim that modern man has attained the *admirable* needlessness of religion rather than the *reproachable* one, he begins with an exposition of the two types of needlessness and assumes that they are applicable in the relations between the teacher and the student and also between the physician and the patient. Then he cites Qur'anic verses and traditions in order to indicate that the relation between the prophet and the people have been regarded as the same in religious sources, as he says: "In religious teachings, the relation between the prophet and the Muslim community

has been likened to the relation between the teacher and the student and also between the physician and the patient. In the *Nahj al-Balagha* ("The Peak of Eloquence") regarding the description of the Prophet (ṣ), Imam 'Ali ('a), the Commander of the Faithful, says: "[the Prophet (ṣ) is like] a physician who turns around [in his community] practicing medicine gratis, administering salves on wounds enthusiastically and regards the patient's breath of recovery as his reward."[1] We have also heard from the Prophet (ṣ) that, as a teacher, he came to perfect moral virtues.[2] It is said in the Qur'an that the Prophet (ṣ) was appointed to teach and purify the souls.[3] Thus the relation between the Prophet and the people, likened to the three relations of the teacher, the educator, and the physician with the student, the apprentice and the patient, are clearly specified in the Qur'an and other sources of Islamic teachings.[4]

Citing the Qur'anic verses and the traditions following an expression of the specific characteristics of the relation between the physician and the patient and also that between the teacher and the student indicate that, regarding the relation between the Prophet (ṣ) and the Muslim community, such characteristics are true. Therefore, people may become needless of prophets if the student and the patient are able to become needless of the teacher and the physician.

Evaluation

Could the above mentioned Qur'anic verse and the traditions confirm the said author's opinion? The answer is negative, because:

First, undoubtedly, the Prophet (ṣ), to some extent, functioned like a teacher and educator, but such resemblance does not necessitate modern man's needlessness of these teachings. Those who are presently aware of

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1. *Nahj al-Balagha*, sermon 180.

2. *Bu'ithtu li-uttimmu makarim al-Akhlaq* "I was [Divinely] inspired to perfect moral virtues."

3. 3:164; 62:2

﴿ يَتْلُواْ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتِهِۦ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ ﴾

"Reciting unto them His Verses and purifying them and instructing them the Book and the wisdom."

4. *Kiyan* (periodical), no. 29, p. 13.

Islamic teachings have learned them through prophets and their successors. Those who are unaware of such teachings have to learn them. So long as they have not learned them, they do not become needless of receiving education. Therefore, no one is needless of prophetic teachings. So long as one does not learn anything per se, he may not learn it. If someone studies and became a physicist, it does not entail that the members of his family and the coming generations may unconsciously become physicists, since each of them requires studying independently.

Secondly, the relation between the physician and the patient suffering from a certain somatic malady is such that the patient may recover and become needless of the physician, but it may be said that in respect of the relation between the prophet (ṣ) and the Muslim community, there is telling evidence indicating the impossibility of man's needlessness of Qur'anic education, i.e. the diagnosis and treatment of psychic and spiritual maladies and moral education are not as convenient as the treatment and cure of somatic maladies. Consequently, if thousands of patients suffering from somatic maladies recover each and every single day, thanks to advancements in medical sciences and become needless of physicians, psychic and spiritual maladies are ever on the rise and the need for physicians treating moral maladies in the modern world is felt far more than before. The other point is that men may look at the infallible religious models and attain a higher level of moral soundness and spiritual growth, but, owing to the persistence of the concupiscent faculty, Satanic temptations, and the moral growth complications on the one hand, and the infallible state of such models on the other, others may never attain the station of such educators; as a consequence, man, as in the past, requires the treatment of such physicians.

Thirdly, a simile never indicates that the thing likened is similar to which a thing is likened. Therefore, to understand a simile, in addition to the recognition of the thing likened and that to which a thing is likened, the point of similarity is to be taken into consideration. The proposition "'Ali is like a lion" does not signify that 'Ali has a tail and a mane, but it reveals the similarity between 'Ali's and lion's boldness. Assimilating the Prophet (ṣ) to a physician or a teacher does not mean that the relation between the prophet and the community is in all respects exactly like the relation between the ordinary teacher and the student, but indicates the similitude between the twain in terms of the point of similarity, which is

the prophet's didactic and educational role in the society. In other words, prophets, like teachers, teach men and treat them like physicians. But, is it possible that one day, men become needless of these teachers and physicians? To answer this question, one should probe into other spheres such as theology, anthropology, the shortcomings of science and human intellect, and also the reason lying behind the necessity of revelation.

Fourthly, if the similitude of the relation between the prophet and the community, and the relation between God and His servants resemble the relations between the teacher and the physician and the student and the patient respectively, as mentioned in the verses and traditions, it necessitates a total similitude of such relations in all respects, ignoring the point of similarity, which shall entail the following fallacious consequence: in respect of ordinary men, not only the student and the patient may become needless of the teacher and the physician respectively, but also the student may attain to a scientific station far higher than that of his teacher. The patient may not only recover from maladies, but also may become sounder than his former physician. Consequently, ignoring the point of similarity and its overgeneralization necessitates that we be able to attain some knowledge far above that of the prophets and the Imams, even become needless of learning the Divine sciences and attain a scientific station far higher than that of God. In terms of moral education, we may also attain an existential and spiritual station far higher than that of the prophets, the Imams and even God, the Lord of the both worlds.

Axiomatic teachings

The said author, by citing specimens of Islamic teachings that have become self-evident to modern man, follows another route to confirm and reinforce modern man's claim to needlessness of religion. He intends to clarify that today, these teachings have become self-evident; therefore, it is not required to learn them. Here, he makes mention of two points: the establishment of moral concepts and virtues, such as justice and self-evidence of idols made of stone and date. Regarding this point he says: "The prophet of Islam (ṣ) endeavored to desanctify the stone and date idols in the Arabian Peninsula, but it is self-evident to the modern

civilized man. As a consequence, men are needless of such teachings."[1]

Evaluation

From among the whole array of Islamic teachings and commands and the boundless sea of the Qur'an and the traditions, the said author makes mention of worshipping stone and date idols and justice, since he recognizes such commands as self-evident to modern man, regarding it as a support for claiming the *admirable* needlessness of religion, but his conclusions are inaccurate, because:

Firstly, it is insufficient to merely three specimens for such colossal claim. Defective induction may not serve as grounds for a generalized claim. How may one, who endeavors to establish modern man's needlessness of all Islamic teachings, merely suffice to make mention of three or four specimens, from among hundreds of commands and generalize the conclusion to other commands? How many Qur'anic verses and traditions are devoted to the virtue of justice and the vice of injustice and worshipping stone and date idols whose self-evidence may render man needless of all Islamic teachings? Besides, all the mentioned instances, excluding idolatry, are among moral self-evident concepts and they were needless of prophetic teachings from the outset, and as mentioned above, the objective of prophetic missions is far higher than teaching moral axioms.[2]

Secondly, his viewpoint concerning idolatry is deficient and suffers from the following problems:

Worshipping stone idols are common today in many societies. In a number of societies, stone idols fashioned in the likeness of some human or animal limbs and organs, even genitals, are being worshipped, which were not perhaps of any precedence in the time of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ). Religions such as Buddhism, which have many followers in a number of countries, including West countries, may serve as an example.

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1. *Kiyan* (periodical), no. 29, p. 14.

2. A discussion regarding the topic: "Could the self-evidence of moral concepts serve as the basis for the modern man's needlessness of religion?" followed Mr. Soroush's second proposition of the intellect, therefore, there is no need for reiterate it.

The full-scale endeavors of the Islamic faith against idolatry did not merely include abandonment of worshipping stone and wooden idols, but also embraced worshipping an array of idols on different levels, which may be even encountered nowadays among Muslim and non-Muslim, civilized and non-civilized nations, though such idols are not of stone and wood. Therefore, modern man is badly in need of a religion that struggles against idolatry in its different forms and manifestations.

If the self-evidence of the foulness of worshipping stone idols in some societies serves as the standard for all humanity's needlessness of all Islamic teachings, it should be said that Muslims perceived it after a lapse of several decades in the first Islamic century and thereafter, few vestiges of worshipping stone and wooden idols were to be found. Consequently, the theory in question necessitates that people were needless of religion at that time, rather than attain to needlessness in the 20th century onwards.

Specific emphasis on Western countries' needlessness of religion

As stated above, the said author aims at the needlessness of humanity and modern society of Islamic teachings. Besides, he specifically emphasizes Western countries' needlessness of Islamic teachings. He maintains that Western societies have perfectly attained such a level and far precede other countries in this respect.

Prior to resuming our discussion in this regard, it is to be noted that the present writer does not intend to present a detailed discussion on Occidental studies and reveal the Western countries' strong and weak points as well as the merits and demerits of his own society. But we are supposed to take a glance in passing at this point that despite the serious steps taken in our country following the Islamic revolution, we are still taking the initial steps. It is incumbent upon us to uncover the weak points of our society ceaselessly and persistently and contribute to improving them. For the advancement of our society, we require means such as referring to the history of human life, making use of the experience of other peoples and nations of the world, particularly that of Western countries. But we cannot ignore the fact that Occidental studies entail complications and delicacies. In such studies, as in the investigation of other phenomena in the world, we have to tread the right and realistic path. One of the points of significance in the accurate

perception of a certain phenomenon is to conduct unbiased research, devoid of pessimism, optimism, and prejudice. Islam has recommended us to study the history of other nations carefully and take lessons in order to improve our history and society. One who intends to study a phenomenon with the aim to destroy and criticize it, concentrates further on its demerits and deprives himself from focusing on its merits. Au contraire, one who studies a topic with an aim to glorify and defend it, immerses oneself in its merits and unwittingly pays no heed to its demerits. A detailed discussion regarding Occidental studies requires another opportunity, which is beyond the limits of the present work. The present work aims at presenting Dr. Soroush's viewpoint regarding the Western needlessness of Islam. Evaluating his ideas regarding this topic does not imply ignoring the scientific advancements of the West and the advantages in Westerners' lives.

His words reveal an excessive glorification of Western countries, in such a fashion that he regards them as having attained to such a high level of growth and exaltation that they are needless of Islamic teachings:

Making mention of parts of his discussions at a session held in Canada may reveal the same point:

Question: "We assume that there exist many a shortcoming in our society, in Iran, and indeed it is so and we have to endeavor to dispel them. I would like to request you to disregard our own society for the time being and ask you a number of questions concerning Western societies. Is there any need at all to struggle in order to revive the Qur'anic teachings, encourage the people in Western societies to convert to the Islamic faith and perform the outward duties such as *salat* ("daily prayers") and *saum* ("fast") as a phase in practicing one's religion? Is it required to do so?"

Dr. Soroush: "What is meant by the revival of the Qur'an, sir? Does it mean establishing daily prayers? … Please mention the sense of the term. The revival of the Qur'an means not to defile anybody's good name, to submit to the administration of justice. In other words, such concepts are supposed to be respected. What is done in practice is another story. Respecting people's good name is not supposed to be subject to question. There should not be any need to teach them these concepts. They may fail to do so in practice, as they do, but it is not open to question. Such

concepts are supposed to be self-evident. What are you telling us? You keep on asking us to respect people's good name. To you, is it well established in the modern society or not? In whatever country might it be? Is it in need of further clarification? Does it require clarification in our society, sir? Our discussion does not concern the point that they are not acted upon in practice. It is not established in theory at all. That is what I am trying to say. But it has been established elsewhere. If you express them, they say your statements are wearisome. They say we know. We have said and written such things ten times more than you. Now it is a different story that they presently fail to practice them. Failing to practice may always exist. My discussion concerns prophetic teachings. The essence of their teachings is that man is to be respected. Have such teachings impressed people in such a fashion that it is not required to discuss the issue?"[1]

The dialogue reveals that the question precisely concerns the issue whether it is required to struggle in the West to revive the Qur'anic teachings, to disseminate the Islamic faith in the West and encourage Westerners to convert to Islam. His reply to the question is that reviving the Qur'anic teachings and the Islamic faith lie in the self-evidence of the value of certain concepts such as justice and respecting other people's good name, and such concepts are axiomatic in the West. In other words, as he has already emphasized the issue that people are not in need of Islamic teachings if the essentials of prophetic teachings are known to them. Here he states that the essentials of the prophetic teachings have become self-evident to Westerners. As a consequence, they are needless of Islamic teachings and it is not required to revive the Qur'anic teachings in the West. In fact, what he emphasizes here is the Westerners' needlessness of comprehending Islamic teachings. They are needless in theory, but it does not indicate that they are not confronted with complications in practice.

The issue as raised by the said author indicates Westerners' full-scale needlessness of Islamic teachings. His statements were mentioned in the beginning of the chapter (5.6.2. Presentation of a specific standard for needlessness). Therefore, mention will be made of the sentences in

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[1]. Dr. Soroush, lecture, questions and answers session dated 15 March, 1998, held at Fatima Mosque in Montreal, Canada.

question. To present this claim, he takes three steps. In the first step, he states: "A prophet may come and his community may attain to admirable needlessness. It is not wondrous. … I am saying whether we are not supposed to be happy to find out that man has really attained to it. Evidently, we are supposed to be happy."

In the next step, he intends to indicate that Western countries are totally needless of the Islamic faith, as he states: "If you are informed that a number of societies are like this [i.e. needless of Islamic teachings], is it supposed to disturb you? [No] you are supposed to be happy about it. … But we are afraid to say that, as you put it, people in some places have not attained [to such a phase]. Well, now I would like to reply to this question."

The third step is the solution which is provided by him in order to prove his claim. He maintains that the standards for piety are to be altered. When the standards are stated according to his ideas, we shall find out that people in modern societies have attained to a full-scale needlessness of Islamic teachings. He emphasizes that the widespread of erroneous thoughts and ideas held by Muslim jurisprudents and intellectual leaders in our society has resulted in presenting inaccurate standards for piety to society. One of the standards is that "when people in a society follow the Islamic dress code, it is said that the people practice the religion. Westerners do not observe the dress code, therefore, it is said that they have not attained needlessness of prophetic teachings." He clearly states the same point regarding the establishment of salat, abstention from drinking wine, and does not recognize them as standards for piety. Consequently, he concludes that Western societies act against such commands, but they have totally attained to the phase of needlessness of Islamic teachings.

In his discussion, the said author states: "Religion does not exist today in its vulgar sense, as it once used to be. It does not exist in our society either. Even if it exists, you can rarely find it here."[1] By *here*, he does not mean Iran, but Western countries, since it is comprehended thus from his speech delivered in Montreal. In his statements, he explicitly, but cautiously, glorifies the West on the grounds that they do not believe in

1. *Ibid.*

the vulgar version of religion, but he denounces Iranians for their belief in the vulgar form of religion. In other words, he states that contrary to Iranians' religiosity, Westerners' religion is intellectual. By *vulgar religiosity*, he means practicing religion by performing religious duties, abstaining from unlawful acts, as by *intellectual religion*, he means Islam devoid of commands.

His reply regarding the Western societies' needlessness of religion becomes obvious from the aforesaid points, since his main argument is the presentation of a specific standard for needlessness and also the self-evidence of religious teachings to them, whose critiques have already been mentioned above. Shortcomings of the intellect and science and also the problems arising from Western irreligiosity have been already mentioned.

6. THE WEST AND THE DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES OF EXTREME SCIENTISM AND RATIONALISM

To complement our discussion on the shortcomings of science and the intellect on the path to guidance, a brief account of the consequences of Western extreme scientism and materialistic rationalism is presented. Sheer dependence on the twain has adversely impressed modern societies and has called scholars to revise the materialistic thoughts prevalent in the West. Such revision has been conducive to a theoretical deadlock and a practical crisis. In theory, the modern world has experienced the deadlock of science and the solely materialistic intellect, and in practice it has confronted many a social problem deriving from this attitude.[1] A number of the adverse effects will follow.[2]

Nihilism, anxiety, and loneliness

Among the damaging effects of Western scientism are, nihilism and meaninglessness of life. A number of Western writers have disseminated nihilistic thoughts in the modern age. Writers like Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Jean Paul Sartre, and Eugene Unesco were nihilists who raised the issue in their dramas, novels, short stories, essays and articles. A number of them intended to provide man's meaninglessness of life and destiny with intellectual support and some depicted man's meaningless life and adversity artistically devoid of any logical and dialectic support. The protagonists of their works are indifferent and cold-blooded concerning life and its values, irresponsible toward social customs, and careless about relations with others.[3] Jean

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1. A number of the theoretical deadlocks shall be mentioned in the chapter "The deadlock of excessive scientism."

2. It is to be noted that some material and the references incorporated in the chapter "The West and the damaging effects of excessive reliance on science and the intellect" and the first appendix have been excerpted from Mir Ahmad Hajati's book entitled *Imam Khomeini's Age*.

3. 'Abd Allah Nasri, *Falsafe-ye Khelqat-e Ensan* ("The Philosophy of the

Forestier regards nihilism as springing from excessive scientism and states: "according to Sartre's or Kafka's thoughts, whose works may be considered to be the adverse consequences of experimental sciences, humiliating and disparaging traditional values, man is a meaningless creature who is abandoned in a meaningless world … Such nihilistic thoughts have permeated modern Western literary classics."[1]

It is evident that by proclaiming the futility of life and the absurdity of the world, "Life on the earth [for many Westerners] has practically lost its meaning. Modern Western civilization has provided modern man with numerable material possibilities which could not be dreamed of by preceding generations. But, since the meaning of man is lost and it has become unknown in this civilization, his far-fetched expectations and aspirations are ignored and unknown and all these material possibilities cannot save him from getting entangled in adversity and despair."[2]

In spite of being at the apex of scientific and technological advancements, the West is experiencing circumstances which Alvin Toffler calls one of the most surprising social phenomena of all times. He states: "One of the most wondrous social phenomena of modern age, i.e. the unprecedented prevalence of religious sects and books, may solely be comprehended if the three factors: loneliness; lack of structure; futility, absurdity, and meaninglessness; stemming from the decline of the Industrial civilization, be placed together."[3]

If science and the intellect were sufficient for man's happiness, we would not experience the present spiritual crisis in the modern world, its ever increasing intensity, and rise in the West. If material welfare brought about the Garden of Eden, no one would mention the shortcomings of the West, and the statement, "Indeed, there exist absurdity, material welfare, and a spiritual defect in the West, but Westerners intend to make their

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Creation of Man"), p. 16.

1. Jean Forestier, *Bohran-e daneshgah* ("University Crisis"), tr. 'Ali Akbar Kasma'i, p. 105.

2. Roger du Pasquier, *Sargozasht-e Eslam, Sarnevesht-e Ensan* ("The Destiny of Islam, the Destiny of Man"), tr. 'Ali Akbar Kasma'i, p. 19.

3. Alvin Toffler, *Mowj-e Sevvom* ("The Third Wave"), tr. Shahindokht Kharazmi, p. 517.

lives meaningful,"[1] would have no sense.

1. Roy Dome, President of the Third World Research Center, Belgium, in an interview with Hozur Quarterly, no. 18, Winter 1375/1996.

The martyred scholar, Murtada Motahhari states in this respect: "It has often been perceived nowadays that scientism (i.e. sheer tendency towards science) and teaching pure science are unable to make perfect man. Pure scientific education … makes man one-dimensional, rather than multi-dimensional. Nowadays, everybody knows that the age of pure science is over and an ideal emptiness threatens societies. … Will Durant admits that the existing emptiness is an ideal one in the first place, one in respect of intentions, ends and ideals, one which is conducive to nihilism.[1]

According to Eric Fromme, technological advancements have not been able to provide man with peace of mind which, according to The World Health Organization (WHO), is the pivot of health and the first step in a happy life; au contraire, they have divested man of peace of mind. Predominance of sheer science and technology necessitates anxiety and nihilism. Modern man does not experience peace of mind and feels more humiliated … and feels that his activities are absurd."[2]

More unfortunate is that, "psychologists have termed this age as *the age of anxiety*. According to the statistics in a world termed as postmodernist, the majority of hospital beds in the United States are used by mental patients."[3]

The origin of the problem lies in the reality that "Today, our world suffers from the famine of interpreting the meaning of the world and existence."[4]

According to Rudolf Christopher Eucken, when man becomes incapable of elevating himself through the assistance of an exalted power and making himself better and more perfect day by day, he feels increasingly that life loses meaning and value.[5]

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1. Mortada Motahhari, *Moqaddame-i bar Jahan-bini-ye Eslami* ("An Introduction to the Islamic Worldview"), p. 24-25.

2. Eric Frome, *Ensan bara-ye Khishtan* ("Man for himself"), tr. Akbar Tabrizi, p. 14.

3. Mohamamd Reza Sharafi, *Roshd* (periodical), vol. 4, Autumn and Winter 1374/1995.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Nasri, *Falsafe-ye Khelqat-e Ensan* ("The Philosophy of the Creation of

Mental fatigue and the feeling of spiritual and moral emptiness

Science, technology, and their material benefits are incapable of satisfying the innate and spiritual needs of man and his desire to find his self. They have caused many people to turn to religion, as Kat Stevens, the famous English singer who quit his profession and converted to Islam. He stated that his conversion to Islam had been due to a heart-rending spiritual emptiness which had caused him to experience sensitive circumstances. In this respect, he states: "I grew up in London in the age of television, space travels, and instantaneous industrial developments, and lived in the advanced Western world. For a good number of years, I had access to whatever anyone could wish for, but I had always been feeling emptiness in my life."[1]

Ms. Brigitte Jamila, the new European Muslim convert, mentions her "spiritual emptiness," prior to her conversion to Islam, saying: " I was not religious throughout the twenty-six years of my life, spending it, like other Europeans, on carnal joys, but I was always experiencing emptiness and deficiencies. Despite all my efforts to dispel this emptiness from my life, my psychological state turned incessantly from bad to worse. Of course, I seemed to be happy."[2]

Despite modern man's availability of experimental science and the intellect, he finds it insufficient for moral and spiritual guidance and his innate needs. Consequently, many modern intellectuals in the West admit that, "We are misguided from the right path and seek institutions beyond us and … our frail spirituality, to possess the capacity to provide us with morals and spirituality."[3] Cries of severe, spiritual poverty are heard from the West and those who cry regard it as necessary that, despite their financial and economic circumstances, some spiritual revolution and development should occur.[4]

Man"), p. 22.

1. *Neda-ye Jam'i-ye Zanan-e Enqelab-e Eslami* [periodical] ("The Collective voice of the Islamic Revolution Women"), nos. 17-18.

2. Susan Safaverdi, *Rastakhizi dar Tariki* ("Resurrection in Darkness"), p. 69.

3. Neil Postman, Tekno-puli (Techno-money), tr. Sadeq Tabataba'i, p. 211.

4. Antonio Medrano, in an interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Spanish

Perceiving the necessity of returning to spiritual values in the West arises from the incapacity of science and the intellect in solving moral and spiritual problems. Nowadays, many inhabitants of Western countries have felt the destructive effects and overwhelming suffering of alienation from religion and spirituality. They have come to the conclusion that: "They are supposed to attain the perception of the world and man, by which life may find meaning and purpose, and the moral and spiritual values find a reliable support."[1]

The weariness resulting from materialism and moving toward spirituality in the West has been the subject of numerable studies, including those by Bill Maizer, the American journalist and researcher. He presented the results of his studies in ten consecutive programs broadcast from television network, on which he stated that "People all over the world are tired of materialism and are immediately returning toward spirituality and the return began sometime ago."[2] He emphasized that "Religion and absolute adherence to its tenets have become the center of attention once more."[3]

A number of Western thinkers, such as George Weigel, have regarded the realities which are the characteristics of modern times as the world tendency toward immaterial matters and state that, "The immateriality of the world [tendency toward religion] is one of the outstanding realities of life at the close of the 20th century."[4]

According to Dr. Bernie Signel, the Western writer, "People [in the West] are earnestly thirsty for spiritual discussions and pursue the meaning of life."[5]

Referring to the social developments occurring in Western countries,

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Radio, *Radio Ma'aref*, 28-11-1378/17-2-1999.

1. *Ibid.*

2. *Hamshahri* [periodical], 29-7-1375/21-10-1996, as quoted from the Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency (IRNA).

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Barkhord-e Tamaddon-ha,* Hantington va Mntaqed-an-ash "Clash of Civilizations, Huntington and his critics"), The Political and International studies Bureau, p. 51.

5. "In pursuit of the sacred" in *Mashreq* [periodical], nos. 2 and 3.

Christian Bono, the French researcher and the newly converted Muslim writes, "Western societies are tired of political and economic discussions and are thirsty for spirituality."[1]

Daniel Dreiserbuck, professor at the American University, believes that "Among the rich, industrial countries, Americans go more to the church. … People [in the West] are tired of materialism and their tendency toward spirituality results from the same weariness and ennui."[2]

The Washington Post, stating one instance among many instances of man tired of the pain of nihilism, purposelessness, and seeking spirituality, writes: "At the time being, twenty million people, thirsty for spirituality, are listening to religious radio stations." In presenting an analysis of the report, the reporter writes: "Because of the psychological perturbation and disillusionment resulting from daily preoccupations in the United States, the majority of the general public seeks refuge in listening to religious radio stations to calm themselves down and approach religious instructions which are never followed in the society."[3]

Many analysts of the Western social problems regard the unprecedented welcoming of spiritual instructions to be due to the thirst of the man who is tired of the industrial world's spiritual emptiness.

Referring to the widespread tendency toward Buddhist instructions in American society, Dr. Huan Poola, the president of the College of Buddhist Studies in Los Angeles, remarks: "Americans are tired of the pressures of life and the world of industry and technology and by taking refuge in the Buddhist instructions centers, liberate their souls from these problems. Such tendency indicates the interest of the American society toward the new spiritual religion and path."[4]

Nowadays, interesting examples reveal the Western societies' tendency toward spirituality, and assist us in arriving at a deeper analysis of this

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1. In an interview with *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* [periodical], 5-9-1375/26-11-1996.

2. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 70, Khordad 1376/May-June 1997, p. 81, as quoted from the Reuters.

3. *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* [periodical], 8-3-1376/29-5-1997.

4. *Buletan-e Farhangi-ye Vezarat-e Ershad-e Eslami* ("The Cultural Bulletin of the Ministry of Islamic Guidance"), no. 57, 1373/1994, p.9.

issue.

William Chittick, professor at the Department of Religions and Mysticism at New York State University, raises the issue of the widespread wave of translating Rumi's poetry in the United States: "Last year, I read in a periodical that Rumi had broken the records among English classics in America and it is surprising!" To find the roots of the phenomenon, he adds: "This wave is due to a number of factors, one of which is the Westerners' thirst for spirituality, and it is of great significance."[1]

Another interesting report reads that Otia, the modern Western music star and the actor of Hollywood neo-musical movies has recently released an album in the United States which has broken the record in the West in the first week of its release. The theme of this controversial album is nothing but the declamation of the English translation of Rumi's ghazals from his *Divan-e Kabir* ("The Great Complete Works"). The poems recited in this album have been artfully translated into English, whose themes include calling mankind to leave the inward darkness, open a window toward the world of light and illumination, and also call the soul to attend the Divine feast. As reported by the American state-run radio station: "According to the cultural experts at American universities, translations of Shams' ghazals (composed by Rumi), particularly the pocket size ones, are surprisingly welcomed by the young generation in America."[2]

John Kane, the thinker of English descent, traveled to Turkey and, in an interview with one of the periodicals there, admitted the fact that, "The administration system in the West is confronting adversity and secularism and has not been able to quench the thirst of man's soul." With a harsh critique of Nietzsche's views, he adds "When Nietzsche raised the issue of slaying God in the West, secularism had reached its zenith, but today we notice that religious revival is raised once more in the West and religion re-presents its application in the social sphere."[3]

The growth of tendency towards religion in the world and particularly the

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1. *Keyhan* [Newspaper], 18-6-1378/8-9-1999.
2. *Jebhe* [periodical], 4-2-1378/24-4-1999.
3. *Yeni Yuzil* [periodical], published in Turkey, 18 May 1997.

fast paced growth of Islam today, despite the overwhelming scientific and materialistic investments against it, cannot be regarded as an insignificant event to be ignored. This movement requires sophisticated analyses, since world experts have discussed it and they have learned that it originates from the shortcomings of extreme scientism and modern man's ennui.

Technology is capable of providing material facilities, but falls short of providing man with happiness and peace of mind. According to an Iranian physician who has been residing in Germany for forty years, "Those who enjoy a materially good life in the West have never been able to feel happiness fully. They seem to be happy. Man cannot be made happy with Mercedes and beautiful houses. Spiritual emptiness is felt in America and Europe. In Hamburg, which accommodates millionaires more than any other European city, lack of spirituality has adversely affected all the aspects of human life. People in Western societies have reached the saturation point in terms of welfare, but they suffer from spiritual emptiness. It is a great message for those who seek happiness in Western countries."[1]

Another well-known Iranian physician residing in the West confirms the said statement: "It is obvious that technique, employed to provide for material needs, is moving with an extraordinary pace in the West. But what the Westerners lack is the technique to provide for psychological needs. We have it. If one is reasonable, capable of stabilizing spiritual matters, e.g. religion and culture, and has access to technique without importing Western culture, he will win the game."[2]

A number of writers acknowledge that, "Loss of faith in Europe and America has made people thirsty for oriental mysticism."[3]

Metamorphosis of man into a machine

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1. Dr. Sayyed Muhammad 'Aqili, *Keyhan-e Hava'i* [periodical], 13-8-1371/4-12-1992.

2. Prof. Khodadust, the famous Iranian ophthalmologist, discussing the issue at a session with the Iranian physicians residing abroad, *Resalat* [newspaper], 29-2-1370/19-5-1991.

3. *Khabar-e Ruz*, supplement dated Thursday 8-8-1382/30-10-2003, quoted from Faride Mahdavi Damghani, the translator of Dante's Divine Comedy.

Ernesto Sabato, the contemporary outstanding Argentine thinker, mentions the absolute predominance of science and advancements in the 19th and 20th centuries as degrading man's dignity and metamorphosing him into the screws and nuts of a colossal machine: "Capitalist and Marxist theorists have had equal shares in the widespread of this abnormal attitude, by which an individual melts down in the general public and the secret of the soul diminishes to the proportion of measurable radiations."[1]

Halim Herbert, the French thinker and researcher working in third world countries, protests against degrading man's formerly elevated state and humiliating his dignity due to the development of Western civilization and culture: "Apart from presenting degrading definitions of man, social sciences and humanities in the West fail to represent anything. At times, man's truth is reduced to the level of an instrument, at times to the level of economy, at times to the level of sexuality, at times to the level of speech, and at times to the level of imagination."[2]

Of course, the truth seeking men have reacted against the erroneous ideas humiliating man's state by returning to religious teachings to perceive existential truths. For instance, Dr. Erich Laroute, professor at Gregory University and the president of the Center for Research Coordination of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, critiques modern culture: "Modern culture attempts to reduce man into an economic factor and an economic agent and presents him as a production or consumption agent. Man's soul rebels in this vein in the postmodernist era and brings about a revolution against such reduction and degradation of the human state and dignity, breaks this crust and departs it; as we noticed, Marxist materialism led to the 1989 disintegration."[3]

Increase in criminal acts

Experimental sciences provide man with utmost material welfare, but

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1. *Payam-e Yuneko* ("The Message of UNESCO") [periodical], no. 243.

2. Halim Herbert, lecture delivered at al-Rahman Mosque, Lyon, France in 1983, *Name-ye Farhang* [periodical], Summer 1375/1996, p. 62.

3. Lecture delivered at the Research Bureau of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran, *Kalame-ye Daneshju* ("Students' Words") [periodical], no. 15, 17-3-1373/7-6-191994.

they fall short of creating a healthy and dynamic society. If they are not rightly directed, they end up committing criminal acts. "On the basis of the researches conducted in twenty industrial countries, it has been obvious that the increase in criminal acts is not due to poverty and backwardness, but the consequences of welfare in industrial societies and Western democratic systems."[1]

Gill Keppel, the famous French sociologist states: "Irreligious, educated individuals maintain that the irreligious culture has driven us to confront a deadlock whose consequences are noticeable in the intensity of criminal acts, divorce, AIDS, narcotics and so on. They disapprove of the industrial contrast between science and faith."[2]

Inability to solve the complications of modern man

Today, many thinkers, focusing on the spheres of science and the intellect, have noticed the unfavorable consequences of infatuation with science in the West, and have voiced the failure of experimental sciences and the intellect in solving the complications involved in modern man's social life.

In his speech, delivered at the International Seminar for Islamic Civilization and Culture, William Chittick regarded the impartiality and justification of modern science and its consequent technology as one of the deadly mistakes of the modern world.[3]

Fritiov Capra, professor of nuclear physics at European and American Universities and the writer of the best-seller *Tao of Physics*, translated into tens of languages, wrote another book entitled *Point of no Return*, which appeared in 1982. Critics considered the book as one of the classics of the 80s. In this work, he expounds the development of prevailing ideas regarding the efficiency of experimental sciences in finding an all-out solution to the complications of the world society: "In the United States, the White House tradition has always been to seek

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1. *Ettela'at* [periodical], supplement, 2511-1371/14-2-1992, The Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency (IRNA), quoted from the German Weekly, Focus.

2. *Sorush* [periodical], no. 551, Farvardin 1370/March-April 1991.

3. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 68, p. 24.

consultation from outstanding university professors as the US president's academic advisors. However, based on existing realities, it may be concluded that in the status quo, these academic brains may not be effective in solving complicated problems any further. The academicians' intellectual basis lies in a scientific viewpoint."[1]

In expressing the cause of the issue, he states: "In a recent detailed report, *The Washington Post*, depicted the shortcomings of the academic brains and the academic advisors of the White House. One of the scholars addressed by this newspaper was Henry Look, professor at New York University. Failing to answer the questions raised by a reporter regarding the role played by experimental scientists in solving complications, he said: "I resign my position, since I have nothing to say. If you ask for my opinion, [I should say that] nobody has anything to say."

Capra continues: "Because of their belief in the prevalent scientific viewpoint, academicians are restricted to an incomplete perception of truth which fails to confront modern problems."[2]

In the last decades, many Western thinkers have regarded the definitions, presented by experimental sciences as the only solution to unknown issues, as inaccurate and unreal. For instance, according to Richard H. Bobb, professor of construction material and electrical engineer in Stanford: "One of the most pernicious lies, so far almost accepted worldwide, is that the scientific method is the only secure way in pursuit of the truth."[3]

Herbert Armstrong, an outstanding American authority, states in this respect: "Modern sciences are absolutely incapable of indicating the purpose of man's life and the path toward humanity, nor are they able to present an accurate and valuable meaning for human life, nor do they recognize the modern values of life. Modern science fails to indicate accurately the path toward peace, wholeness, and peace of mind. It has failed to liberate the world from adversity, hunger, sickness, anxiety, hatred and misfortune. … It lacks the capacity to stop breaking up of

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1. *Name-ye Farhang* [periodical], no. 13, pp. 65-66.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Hosayn Mehri, *Seda-ye Pa-ye Degar-guni* ("The Footsteps of Change"), p. 71.

families, committing criminal acts, corruption and immorality, nor has it succeeded in diminishing the application of inhumane methods and attitudes, insanity and misguidance."[1]

As stated by Emrich Kurt: "The simplistic view regarding scientific and technical advancements leading to happiness is on the decline. Therefore, there exists no other alternative but to perceive the reality that mere material advancement fails in solving problems."[2]

One of the telling examples of the shortcomings of extreme scientism and rationalism for human guidance is the increasing religiosity, particularly the tendency toward Islam in the West and the outset of the decline of sheer materialism. Today the general public as well as the scientists in the West, following a long period of anti-religious sentiment, have entertained doubts concerning their past and have started a new movement.[3]

1. 'Ali Akbar Kasma'i, *Jahan-e Emruz va Farda* ("The Worlds of Today and Tomorrow"), p. 211.

2. Emrich Kurt*, Name-ye Farhang*, Vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1372/1993.

3. For further information regarding this issue on the basis of the acknowledgements found in Western sources, please read the first appendix.

APPENDIX

1. The ever-increasing religious tendencies in the West

Specimens of the ever-increasing religious tendencies toward Islam by Western scholars and the general public are as follows:

The general public in the West

Technology, experimental sciences, and materialism cannot meet man's spiritual needs. As a consequence, the Western world is experiencing colossal social upheaval arising from the thirst for spirituality.

According to a report released by the *Daily Telegraph*: "Social analysts say that one of the causes of people's further attention toward religion is the fact that religion and science are not regarded as disharmonious as before."[1]

Dr. Ponty Kainan, the researcher and professor at the University of Finland states: "A tendency has developed in the modern world to embrace religion and this tendency in on the rise."[2]

In his speech, delivered at Islam and the Differences of World Culture Conference, Peter Schulatur, the well-known German writer and political analyst, emphasizes that "At the time being, the movement of returning to religion and Utopia has begun."[3]

George Metalnius, professor of political science at the College of Theology, Athens, Greece, states: "In this age, religion and returning to religion is flourishing."[4]

Professor Jose Maria, the Spanish scholar remarks: "At present, the world

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1. *Resalat* [daily] 6-3-1376/27-5-1997, as quoted from the Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency.

2. Interview with *Keyhan-e Hava'i*, quoted from *Keyhan-e Farhangi*, Azar 1372/November-December 1993.

3. *Keyhan* [daily], 12-9-1374/3-12-1995.

4. *Keyhan-e Farhangi*, Bahman 1371/January-February 1992.

is impressively turning to religion."[1]

Gustav Yinbur, the American journalist, presented a report at a symposium where American scholars and writers emphasized the return to religion, saying: "Not only in America but also all over the world, the general public's turning to God and religion is impressively on the increase."[2]

Today, Western analysts have found out the extraordinary power of religion in society and maintain that "In the present circumstances, there is no social force stronger than religion in the world."[3] They emphasize that "The people in the world turn increasingly toward God, religion, and spirituality in the East and the West."[4]

In the past, extreme scientism directed everyone toward the belief that secularism was the only unrivaled wave dominating the world, but nowadays, modern man's deadlocks have directed him elsewhere. Analysts remark that "The trend of the nations' return to believing in religions has started like a roaring torrent, putting an end to the assumption that secularism is embracing the world over."[5]

"Everyone was making the mistake in believing that materialism is enfeebling religion and nothing can stand in its way."[6] Nowadays, there is an increasing tendency toward gatherings and assemblies in the Western world whose participants emphasize their religious and spiritual demands from their governments and express their faithfulness towards their religious beliefs.

On the occasion of the Catholic Youth World Day, an impressive

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1. *She'r* [periodical], Shahrivar and Mehr 1372/August-October 1993.

2. *Sobh* [monthy], no. 67, Esfand 1375/February-March 1996.

3. Graham Fuller, the outstanding theorist at the CIA in Foreign politics, *Foreign Poli*, published in the United States, quoted from *Jomhuri Eslami* [daily], 24-3-1374/14-6-1995.

4. The analyst of the French weekly, *Novel Observateur*, quoted from *Abrar* [daily], 6-6-1375/28-8-1996.

5. The analyst of the American periodical *Washington Times*, quoted from *Iran* [daily], 15-5-1376/6-8-1997.

6. David Bart who is in charge of *Universal Encyclopedia of Christianity*, quoted from *Jomhuri Eslami* [daily], 24-5-1371/15-8-1992.

gathering was held in August 1997, in the presence of Pope Jean Paul II, in which more than a million prayed to God. Catholic Youth from 140 countries participated in this event.[1]

Participants at the assembly of The American Black Women in Philadelphia whose number ran to a million declared: "Now, it is high time to strengthen the spiritual bond in the black families and society."[2]

Hundreds of thousands of Americans took part in a sacred gathering upon the call of the Convention Organization. They prayed to God and demanded the return of spirituality to their society.[3]

In another event held in Los Angeles, 43 thousand American youth gathered as Jesus Christ's supporters and declared that their goal in holding the event was to familiarize themselves with spiritual values and reconsider their faith.[4]

Fifteen thousand American women gathered at Ohio city hall to call Americans to monotheism and declared that the only solution to the deadlocks of their society lay in turning to religion and spiritual values.

According to Gustav Niebur, the *New York Times*' reporter, Mrs. Robin Roth, one of the organizers of this impressive and unprecedented assembly, mentioned a speech delivered at a recent gathering in Washington, in which one million people participated upon the call of Louis Farrakhan, the Muslim leader, who remarked that it was after the assembly that the statistics of criminal acts subsided and people returned to fairness and good manners in their dealings with one another.[5]

It is noteworthy that the increasing number of assemblies in the West, particularly in the United States, and the participants' emphasis on non-material demands merely depict a portion of the deep transformation in the Westerners' spiritual taste. Further comprehensive studies are required to gain complete awareness of the trends of spiritual tendencies.

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1. Quoted from periodicals.

2. *Jomhuri Eslami* [daily], 5-8-1376/26-11-1997.

3. *Keyhan* [daily], 13-7-1376/5-10-1997; *Sobh* [monthly], no. 76.

4. *Moballeghan* [periodical], supplement to *Basa'ir* [periodical], Azar 1376/November-December 1997.

5. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 67, Esfand 1375/February-March 1996, p. 80.

A glimpse at the process of the ongoing developments in the West may suffice to perceive the depth and range of the prevalent transformation. A number of the instances of such transformations are as follows.

It is reported that: "The experts of the Western research institutes strongly recommend the marketing designers of commercial firms and the like to take account of the increasing trend of turning to religion in the world.[1]

The Westerners', particularly the Americans', ever-increasing tendency toward religion has led to the fact that "The radio stations in the United States broadcasting religious programs have attracted millions of listeners."[2] According to Reuter, one fourth of adult Internet users in the United States – numbering approximately 28 million – search for the network's religious and spiritual information, whose number amounts to three million people per day.[3]

The status quo has made religious books to be on the list of best-sellers in the West:

"According to a Gallop research institute, approximately 2,000 books on devotional subjects are available in the American market. The number is three times more than the titles published on similar subjects.[4]

Because of the general public turning to religious topics, "Nowadays, it is even a lucrative business for physicists, cosmologists, and astronomers to include God's name in their books, even if they are not concerned about God between the covers. As a consequence, titles such as, *The Language of God and New Physics, the Mind of God*, and the like have made their presence on the book market. The general public welcomes such books, since many people seek some solution to the disharmony between science and religion. They have been told to choose between the twain. Therefore, scholars have taken advantage of the general public's appetite.[5]

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1. *Resalat* [daily], 6-3-1376/27-5-1997, quoting from the English periodical, *Daily Telegraph.*

2. *Jomhuri Eslami* [daily], 8-3-1376/29-5-1997.

3. *Keyhan* [daily], 9-10-1380/30-12-2001.

4. *Sorush* [monthly], no. 635.

5. Mahdi Golshani, *Az 'Elm-e Sekular ta 'Elm-e Dini* ("From Secular Science to

Today, the incoherent tendencies toward religion in modern societies are on the rise and serve as a kind of awakening and self-consciousness; undoubtedly, since the impressive gathering of black Muslims in Washington in 1995 and the outcry of *God is Greater* in front of the White House is an auspicious example of a moral and spiritual upheaval at the center of a modern society.[1]

In his report, published in *Christian Science Monitor*, Robert Maquand, the American writer, describes the 20th century as the century of spiritual curiosity and depicts the advent of religion into the culture of the American general public, especially in the last decade of the century. Presenting a description of diverse religious events, including the demonstration of millions of "the faithful to the Covenant", in which Christian men emphasized their religious obligations, he writes: "Religion has manifested its diverse forms in the American society and it is presently forming American culture." According to him, recently (e.g. in 1997), the religious dimension in stories and well-known adventures that either indicate the deeply rooted cultural characteristics or affect the direction of the events – inside the United States and abroad – have been obvious. Based on this report, religious issues and interpretations which had fallen into oblivion or had been buried in peripheral periodicals for long, occupy the first pages of dailies these days. Television networks devote most of their programs to religious events "which have achieved surprising popularity," and the books about spirituality have been best-sellers. David Haim, the editor in chief of the Chicago based periodical, *Christian Century*, states: "Nowadays, people like to regard themselves in pursuit of spirituality, arising from religious beliefs. Television movies bearing spiritual messages and angels of the Divine threshold have found innumerable viewers this year. They were all made by Hollywood which had never paid any attention to religious issues or even used to show animosity against them."

Quoting Warren Little Field, head of entertainment programs of NBC television network, Maquand writes: "Apparently, viewers all over the United States are eager to watch religious themes." He adds that:

Religious Science"), p. 58.

1. Sayyed 'Ali Asghar Kazemi, *Bohran-e Jame'e-ye Modern* ("The Crisis of Modern Society"), p. 168.

"According to American Best-sellers Society, books which are mostly written about religion and spirituality are the only non-fiction books which do not lose their marketability."[1]

Barbara Controvitz, the Western writer, writes in her report: "Film studios in Hollywood have added the spice of "mysticism" and "life after death" to their products. Pope Jean Paul's new book entitled *Crossing the Gate of Hope* is on the best-sellers' top list.

James Redfield's novel with mystic and spiritual themes entitled *Heavenly Predictions* is on the fiction top list. In the world of music, 2.8 million copies of the album of the Benedict monks of Santo Domingo de Silvas Church which includes religious hymns have been sold.

Kathleen Norris' *Dakota, a Spiritual Geography,* which appeared in 1993, is still on the list of best-sellers. She says that so far, she has received three thousand letters from readers willing to share their spiritual experiences with her.

He adds that "[American] politicians insist that religious services become mandatory at American schools. The number of participants at religious services and lectures has been manifold; they are supposed to write their names on waiting lists and wait for months in order to participate in a number of these lectures."

Thus Controvitz continues: "Students abound in university classes where courses and lectures on mystic and spiritual topics are presented. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Interface Institute presents seven hundred courses on these topics and twenty thousand applicants have enrolled in the courses this year, but the number did not exceed thirteen thousand last year. Approximately 2,000 people attended the lectures delivered by Dr. Dien Urnisch in autumn this year and listened to his usually complicated lectures regarding the prevention of heart attacks by finding inward peace."[2]

There has been an increasing tendency toward religious education and prayers at schools and gymnasiums. According to a report published in

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1. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 78, Bahman 1376/January-February 1997, p. 78.

2. Dar Jostoju-ye Amr-e Qodsi ("in pursuit of the sacred"), tr. Amir Qasemi, *Mashreq* [periodical], nos. 2 and 3.

US Today, Presently, 29% of Americans believe that they do not enjoy sufficient freedom of religious education. In proportion to the surveys conducted in 1998 and 1997, the number shows a 3% and 8% increase respectively. Approximately 48% of Americans believe that authorities are supposed to allow students to perform their prayers and 64% of Americans protest against the prayer ban in sports centers. … Innumerable Americans have denounced the Supreme Court's verdict regarding the students' prayer ban at sports centers."[1]

An Iranian researcher working on another aspect of the spiritual movement and spirituality in the modern world says: "Last week, television satellite networks aired a spiritual song for the first time which is one the manifest indications of the spiritual needs and the spirituality seeking society after the Islamic revolution of Iran. The symbolic name of this impressive and spiritual song is *Puedes Liegar* and is sung by the most famous singers of modern Spain and also by the religious groups whose choirs were all in religious costumes and had a praying pose."

He remarks: "The production of dolls reciting verses of the Bible, is the repetition of a new phenomenon in spiritual tendencies. Compared to the one hundred million dollars spent prior to the advent of the Islamic revolution in Iran, merely the volume of the spiritual commercial transactions in the American society has increased to three billion dollars. The development and formation of the new software expertise and skills in the field of commerce and international services have greatly increased at a number of religious education centers and church organizations, aiming at the establishment of spiritual relations with more audience."

The end of the report reads: "Maria Angelica was a poor nun devoid of any capital except for her attire. As a result of the Catholic believers' encouragement, she participated in the commissioning of a purely religious and spiritual cable television network and was able to create a powerful television network whose audience amounted to 45 million and thereby answered to the spiritual needs by making use of television as a medium."[2]

Not only has modern man not attained needlessness of religion, but feels

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1. *Keyhan* [newspaper], 11-4-1379/2-7-2000.

2. *Keyhan* [newspaper], the culture and thought column, 23-5-1375/14-8-1996.

that he has been deceived and mistaken in the age of modernism; as a result, he pursues religion. The rise and the widespread dissemination of the trend toward religion at the epicenter of the Western neglect, surprises any curious researcher and imparts the inefficiency of scientism to the world.

Based on the results of a statistical survey conducted by Brand Futures Group, the Western citizens' tendency, particularly the modernist class, toward religious issues and topics is on the increase.[1]

Western experts admit the fact that, "Presently, Western churches are more crowded than in the past"[2] and "these days, the return to religion in the United States, England, France, and Spain is so powerful that it has overshadowed everything."[3]

Experts maintain: "The enthusiasm for seeking God has caused many people to participate in religious demonstrations and thus Americans, individually and socially, have increasingly paid further attention to religious issues. Undoubtedly, it is the most obvious and the most outstanding event in the United States in the 70's and the 80's and it will not be in vain to claim that this trend will thoroughly impress the American society, people's conduct, and the culture of the country in the coming years of this century."[4]

Robert Wutna, professor of sociology at Briston University, and Dan Latin, religious affairs reporter, following many interviews with the American general public, published two books entitled *After Paradise* and *After Buying Faith.* According to the said authors who have conducted two separate studies in the East and the West of the United States:

"Nowadays, the American sudden turn to religious life is

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1. *Daily Telegraph*, quoted from *Resalat* [newspaper], 6-3-1376/27-4-1997.

2. *Yeni Yuzil* [periodical], published in Turkey, 18-5-1997.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Furior Colombo, *Khoda dar Amrika* ("God in America"), tr. Muhammad Baqa'i, p. 242. (The author is a sociologist, editor in chief of the Italian newspaper, *Al Stampa*, and a professor at the School of International Affairs, Columbia University.)

unprecedentedly on the rise. … Belief in God and visiting places of worship are prevalent more than any period of time in the past.[1]

Religion is affecting the American society in such a fashion that a Western authority on the subject states: "Religion has manifested itself in the American society in diverse forms and presently it is forming the American culture."[2]

The wave of seeking God and spirituality is on such an increase in the West that it is considered to be one of the most impressive events of the last centuries. Therefore, taking the significance of the subject into account, mention will be made of a number of reports in this respect: "Nowadays, an important region of South America, from the South East to the West, is termed as the "religious belt," since religious activities in this region have been on the rise in the last two decades. The number of church goers and respondents to the questionnaires and surveys attest this fact. Presently, more than 80 % of Americans state that they practice religion and 90 % of them acknowledge the existence of God. … According to these surveys, 60-65 % of the English and 70 % of Italians are of the same opinion."[3]

A report released by PEW Survey Institute in Washington DC reveals that "Americans are increasingly turning to religion and compared to the last decade, more people believe in God and miracles in the present decade."[4]

According to a report released by the Canadian Statistics Bureau: "The number of religious people in Canada is on the rise."[5]

Making use of a survey in which 19,000 people from 21 countries participated, International Center for Social Statistics declared: "The number of youth from Eastern European countries believing in life after

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1. *Jomhuri Eslami* [newspaper], 14-8-1378/5-11-1999.

2. Robert Maquand, *Sobh* [monthly], no. 78, Bahman 1376/January-February 1997, p. 78.

3. Dr. Emami, Professor at the University of Tehran, *Ma'refat* [monthly], no. 21.

4. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 78, Bahman 1376/January-February 1997, p.81.

5. *Resalat* [newspaper], 28-6-1377/19-8-1998.

death is on the increase."[1]

New reports suggest that one third of Americans use the Internet to have access to religious information and closeness to God. The report, excerpted from *Sydney Morning Herald*, suggests that the number of users searching religious material has exceeded from 18 million to 35 million in 2003 which indicates a 94 % increase. In a comparison concerning the growth rate of turning to religion prior to 2003, studies suggest that the number of Internet users searching religious material has increased from 3 million in 2000 to 5 million in 2002, which indicates a 60 % growth rate.[2] The report released by PEW Survey Institute in Washington DC suggests: "Only between March 2000 and September 2001, the number of users with such enthusiasm has increased from 18 million to 28 million. Particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 catastrophe, more than 40 % of users throughout the world, used the Internet to exchange prayers, 23 % of which involved material regarding the Islamic faith.[3]

Religious pretension for winning elections

The widespread turning to religion by the general public is such that politicians pretend to be religious to achieve their political goals and win elections. In a report, CNN released statistics in this regard: "The circulation of religious books suggests a 6 % increase in 1995. The increase in the spiritual and religious tendencies of the general public brought about significant transformation in the political arena, particularly in political campaigns. "Taking advantage of religious propaganda in a number of Western countries to attain the satisfaction and votes of the general public has grown impressively in recent years. Consequently, the nominees from the Conservative and Labor Parties, running for the office of premier in England, presented unprecedented descriptions regarding their religious beliefs." [4] "In their presidential campaigns, the Democrat Bill Clinton and the Republican Bob Dahl

1. *Jomhuri Eslami* [newspaper], 24-5-1371/15-8-1992.

2. *Khabar-name* 838, p. 37.

3. *Ibid.*

4. "Tony Blair and his rival", *Keyhan* [newspaper], 11-1-1376/31-3-1997.

made use of religious slogans."[1]

In the last presidential campaign in the United States, George Bush and McCain, the two Republican nominees, talked about the impressions of Jesus Christ's teachings on their characters and religious beliefs. Al Gore and Bill Bradley, the two Republican nominees, emphasized their own and also their families' religiousness by stating that religious values were to be reinforced for Social reforms."[2]

Al-Awsat (periodical), in an analytical report on the religious tendency and its examples in the cradle of Western civilization, the United States, reads: "Apparently, religion is one of the significant factors in presidential campaigns in the United States. … Bill Clinton, the then American president always put an end to his speeches by the formula: "O God! Make the United States happy!"

In this regard, Garry Wafer, professor at George Town University, states: "If Clinton forgets to say this formula at the end of his speech one day, he will not be able to dispel Americans' harsh criticism, since it will be said that he did not respect religion. However, according to the American constitution, any kind of supporting religion and intermingling religion and politics are forbidden."

The periodical further reads: "The American society has never paid such attention to religion. Today, the attention has reached the extent that Dr. Jabir al-'Ulwani, the president of Islamic Support in Virginia states: "A number of religious Protestants in America engage in discussions and disputations with me concerning Averroes, the Muslim thinker, and state that he is responsible for the advent of secularism in the West."

Dr. John Well, professor of History of Islam at George Washington University, states: "Twenty-five years ago, Americans were amazed when Carter, the former president of the United States, said that he was religious, since at that time, irreligiousness and secularism were considered as sources of pride. It was for the same reason that Kennedy

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1. "Mosahebe ba Doktor Mahdi Golshani" ["Interview with Dr. Mahdi Golshani"], *Sobh* [monthly], no. 35.

2. Khabar-Gozari Jomhuri-ye Eslami ["The Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency"], 20-6-1376/11-9-1997; Resalat [newspaper] 8-10-1378/29-12-1999.

denied religiousness in his election campaign.[1]

Politicians have also expressed their inclination toward religion. For instance, Johannes Rau, the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, demanded the use of the word "God" in the new constitution of the European Union. According to a report released by Agence France-Press, in his speech at the Polish parliament, Rau said: "Using the word "God" in the new constitution of the European Union, which is in the process of composition, is in line with the traditions of Jesus Christ ('a) in Europe." He added: "The use of the Name "Allah" in the openings to compositions is not particular to any specific religion, but it is also employed in Christian bodies."[2]

The twenty-first century: the decline of secularism

Religious tendency in the West has been on such a rise that the 20th century has been described by scholars as "the century of extraordinary religious impression on the different dimensions of human life."[3]

Robert Maquand, the American author, has termed the twenty-first century as the century of man's spiritual curiosity and on the basis of the available statistics, figures, and evidence, predicts that "The new century will be the era of religious effervescence and the expectations of the general public in this regard will be on the rise."[4]

To confirm the authenticity of the said issue, *Observateur*, the French weekly, quotes Andre Malraux, the outstanding French writer and the former minister of cultural affairs, who, in the presentation of his prediction, stated: "The twenty-first century either shall not exist or shall be the century of religion." The said weekly further reads: "Malraux's prediction has been realized as return to religion is to be noticed everywhere."[5]

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1. *Shoma* [weekly], quoted from *al-Awsat*, 14-5-2000.

2. *Baztab* [news website], 12-2-1383/12-5-2005, local time: 16:20:49.

3. According to the analyst of *Novel Observateur*, the French weekly, quoted from *Abrar* [newspaper], 6-6-1375/28-8-1996.

4. *Sobh* [monthly], no. 78; the Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency, quoted from *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 78.

5. *Abrar*[newspaper], 6-6-1375/28-8-1996.

Western researchers regard the tendency toward religion to be unimaginable and write thus: "The process of the nations' return to belief in religion has started like a roaring torrent and the assumption that secularism will permeate worldwide has come to an end."[1] They explicitly consider the theory of the decline of religion to be erroneous and declares: "Everyone was erroneously thinking that materialism was debilitating religion and nothing was able to withstand it."[2]

Today, the West notices that religion, belief in God, and seeking spirituality are innate to man, since making people distant from religion and disseminating hatred against it for long have failed to quench the voice of their innate nature.

Western scholars' ever-increasing religious tendencies

Turning to religion in the West is on the increase among the general public as well as the scholars. The latter have perceived the determining role of religion in opening the deadlocks of modern science and noticed the surprising developments of the last two decades.

2. Scholars' religious tendencies at the beginning of the 20th century

The development of scholars' religious tendencies reveal that prior to the 19th century, when classical physics was at its zenith, many scholars were among the believers of their societies. For instance, despite a number of preconceptions, "Founders of modern science, e.g. Kepler in the 16th century, Galileo in the 17th century, Newton in the 18th century were religious."[3] Generally speaking, it may be said that "Seventeenth century scholars, like Galileo, were practicing Catholics, and scholars like Robert Boyle (1627-1691), believed in the religious mission of science."[4] "Newton, the icon, to whom modern physics owes much, was a theologian, who regarded man to be God's creature. He was particularly fond of theology. James Clerk Maxwell was another outstanding

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1. According to the analyst of *Washington Times*, quoted from *Iran* [newspaper], 15-5-1376/6-8-1997.

2. David Bart, the chief editor of *Universal Encyclopedia of Christianity*, quoted from *Jomhuri Eslami* [newspaper], 24-5-1371/15-8-1992.

3. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, *Keyhan* [newspaper], 22-4-1378/12-6-1999.

4. Ian Barbour, *Elm va Din*, tr. Baha' al-Din Khorramshahi.

physicist in the 19th century who spent Sundays studying theology."[1] "Most of the classical physicists like Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Alstead, Ampere, Michael, Faraday, Henry, and Maxwell proved the existence of God by referring to systematicity and consistency in nature. All these scholars regarded physics as the means by which God's tokens in the systematic nature are manifest."[2] Galileo stated: "The Divine manifestation in natural acts is not less obvious than His manifestation in the sacred sentences of the Bible."[3]

However, the growth of classical physics in the 19th century led to extreme reliance on the capabilities of science by a number of scholars. As a consequence, the West experienced the rise and spread of empirical thoughts and their dominance on Western academia. Emphasizing empiricism, many scholars in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, rejected the authenticity of any philosophical and religious knowledge. The thoughts of scholars like Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the French philosopher and sociologist, were dominant. He merely recognized empirical data as valuable and scientific, and regarded himself as the prophet of the religion of humanity. Such intellectual and scientific environment increased the rejection of religious beliefs and marginalized Western religious individuals and scholars.

The apex of these thoughts is noticeable in logical positivism.[4] This philosophical trend originated from the sessions held by intellectuals, including mathematicians and logicians between 1922 and 1936.[5] A number of philosophers, physicists, mathematicians, and logicians invited Moritz Schlick, the German positivist philosopher (1880-1936), to teach

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1. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, *Keyhan* [newspaper], 22-4-1378/12-6-1999.

2. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, "Fizik-danan-e Gharbi va Mas'ale-ye Khoda-bavari" (Western Physicists and the Issue of Believing in God"), *Qabasat* [periodical], Spring 1376/1997.

3. *Ibid.*

4. One of the important sources for the study of logical positivism is John Passmore's article in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* edited by Paul Edwards. Karl Popper calls this article as an excellent historical article on positivism. The article in question is translated by Mr. Khorramshahi in *Pozitivism-e Manteqi* ("Logical Positivism"), published by Sherkat-e Entesharat-e 'Elmi va Farhangi.

5. Nancy Murphy, Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism, p. 39.

Inductive Philosophy at the University of Vienna. They were later known as the Vienna group.[1] Alfred Jules Ayer (1910-1989) was one of the best speakers of this intellectual trend in England.[2] More than any one else, he endeavored to raise and disseminate the issues of the Vienna group in the English speaking world. His special work on logical positivism, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, has been regarded as one of the most influential classics in the 20th century.[3] The proponents of this view considered all moral and religious propositions to be devoid of meaning and rejected any authenticity in religious beliefs.

There were believing scholars in this dark age, but the rise and spread of scientism, empiricism, and positivism worsened the poisonous atmosphere and entailed destructive impressions on the scientific trend and scholars in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, to the extent that a survey sent to one thousand scholars in different fields, in which 700 of them participated, revealed that only 40 percent of them believed in God. Based on the results, it was predicted that the percentage of believers diminished at the end of the 20th century.[4] In 1950, Ann Peard, the outstanding university professor in the United States said: "I examined fifty psychology textbooks used in American universities, but they did not include even one minor discussion on religion as a human and emotional discussion."[5]

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1. Khorramshahi, *Pozitivism* ("Positivism") [n.195}, p. 3-5.

2. Brown, et al., Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Philosophers, p. 884.

3. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1949).

4. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, Interview with *Keyhan* [newspaper], 22-4-1378/12-6-1999.

5. Dr. Mahmud Golzari, *Pegah* [monthly], Tir 1380/June-July 2001.

3. The Deadlock of excessive scientism

In the beginning of the 20th century, empirical views were gradually on the decline. Logical positivism, constituting the apex of empiricism in the sphere of semantics, suffered from critique by the members of the Vienna group, including, Gilbert Raille (1900-1976). a professor and a logical positivist at the outset, separated from the group and warned against the nullification of all philosophical claims including the proceedings of the Vienna group sessions published in *Gnosis* (periodical).[1] In *The Nature of Science*,[2] Chalmers uncovers the shortcomings of science. Alfred Jules Ayer, the best proponent and speaker of this intellectual trend, and the author of the most impressive classic on logical positivism, *Language, Truth, and Logic*, in an interview with Brian Magee replied to the question "Have you encountered seminal defects in your logical positivism?" by saying: "I assume that its most important defect was that almost all of it was fallacious and devoid of truth."[3]

The deadlock of absolute scientism and its consequent crises gradually came to light in the first half of the 20th century. The development of the tendency toward religion found a novel course, and the number of monotheist scholars believing in the harmony of science and religion increased. In this era, authorities like Max Planck (1858-1947), the quantum[4] physics theorist, explicitly raised the issue of "the harmony between science and religion and their harmony against superstitions."[5] Shallow, the American physicist and Noble peace prize winner, mentioned his belief in God and the necessity of inquiring from religion

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1. Khorramshahi, *Positivism-e Manteii* ("Logical Positivism"), p. 33-34.

2. Allen F. Chalmers, *Ciisti-ye 'Elm* ("The Nature of Science"), tr. Sa'id Ziba-kalam, pp. 84-88.

3. B. Magee, *Men of Ideas*, pp. 106-107; Karnap va Falsafe-ye Tahlili ("Carnap and Analytical Philosophy"), *Orghanun* [periodical], nos.6-7, p. 211.

4. This theory proves that the radiation energy has divisible structure like matter and it may not exist unless in the form of quanta. The theory constitutes the foundation of modern physics.

5. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, "Fizik-danan-e Gharbi va Mas'ale-ye Khoda-bavari" (Western Physicists and the Issue of Believing in God"), *Qabasat* [periodical], Spring 1376/1997.

and receiving answers from it.[1] Packinghorn, the English physicist, considered science without religion to be defective. Margenou, the American physicist and Einstein's colleague, presented his opinion concerning the necessity of religion for science and restated Einstein's belief according to which "the discovery of a fundamental, nature-proven law is Divine inspiration."[2] Scholars like Morrison, professor at the Academy of Sciences, New York, and Rouvire, professor of anatomy at Medical School, Paris, made use of physics, biology, physiology, and mathematics in order to prove the existence of God and purposefulness of life.[3]

Developments in the field of humanities occurred in this era. For instance, psychology had been non-religious so far, but new horizons gradually emerged. With the rise of an anti-Freud wave, psychologists, e.g. Victor Frankel,[4] Mary Douglas, Karen Horney (1885-1952),[5] Carl Rogers (1902-1987),[6] Gordon Allport (1967-1997),[7] and Abraham Maslow (1908-1970),[8] discoveries came to light that had the utmost sympathy with religion. Contrary to Freud (1856-1939),[9] who maintains that the tendency toward religion is the result of the Oedipus complex,[10]

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1. *Ibid.*

2. Dr. Mahdi Golshani, "Fizik-danan-e Gharbi va Mas'ale-ye Khoda-bavari" (Western Physicists and the Issue of Believing in God"), *Qabasat* [periodical], Spring 1376/1997.

3. C. Morrison, *Raz-e Afarinesh-e Ensan* ("The Secret of Man's Life"); H. Rouvire, *Hayat va Hadaf-dari* ("Life and Purposefulness"), tr. Muhammad Sa'idi.

4. The German psychologist.

5. The German psychologist and the founder of the American psychoanalysis Institute.

6. The American psychologist.

7. The American psychologist.

8. The American psychologist.

9. The Austrian specialist in psychological complications and the founder of psychoanalysis.

10. According to Freud, God is an illusion and theism is the unconscious consequent of Oedipus complex, i.e. man depicts a picture of an earthly father on a cosmic scale to take refuge in Him for his own peace and comfort. Freud regards religion as human idealism arising from man's faith-seeking. He is like

stemming from the child's sexual love toward his mother, and religiousness is in fact a kind of psychological complication, these psychologists hold that religiousness is a tendency inherent in man.[1]

An Iranian contemporary scholar who participated in academic conferences abroad depicts the transforming trend of the scholars' view as follows:

"A few years ago, I had traveled to London to take part in a seminar entitled "The Physical Interpretation of Relativity." The discussion was on cosmology. A Belgian physicist and philosopher, discussing a cosmological model, mentioned God's Name. An American physicist from the University of Oxford stated: "There is no room to name God at a physics conference. I myself bear witness to it. But no, the situation has transformed to the extent that four years ago, the "American Association of Advancement in Science," the most important scientific Association in the United States, whose members are renowned scientific figures in America, held its conference. What was unprecedented was that besides the common parallel sessions, one session or two concerned "the relation between science and religion." These sessions were so packed that they overshadowed others and led to the protest voiced by seminar authorities. In other words, the situation has undergone a drastic transformation. Once it was not in vogue to make mention of religion at the academia, but nowadays, it is different."[2]

The incapacity of science was also confirmed by Bruce Mingan, professor of epistemology at the University of California, Berkeley. At the second conference entitled "Adaptation of Science and Religion" (India, January 1996), he made reference to the increasing and unprecedented scholarly tendency toward religion in recent years and stated: "From the outset of the present century, the scientific method

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Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) in regarding the concept of God as the product of human imagination. Cf. Ian Barbour, *'Elm va Din* ("Science and Religion"), tr. Baha' al-Din Khorram-shahi, p. 293-294.

1. Homayun Hemmati, "Rahyaft-e Din-shenasi-ye Emam Khomeyni" ("Imam Khomeini's Approach in Religious Studies"), *Keyhan Farhanii*, no. 136, Mehr 1376/August-September 1997.

2. Mahdi Golshani, *Keyhan* [newspaper], 7-11-1375/27-1-1996 and 22-4-1378/13-7-1999.

fossilized. It was limited to the observation of sheer extraneous realities and regarded religion and religious experience as an everlasting foe, but fortunately, since the outset of the present decade, the interest in consciousness and also religious and spiritual experiences in scientific literature have been revitalized."[1]

In recent years, religiousness has been on the increase in many scientific centers and the renowned universities of the world, particularly in the West in such a fashion that

"Presently, around 300 to 500 students regularly participate in devotional services at Stanford University, where prayers were regarded as devoid of value."[2]

Statistics suggest that "Half of the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) researchers in France believe in God and many of them feel that they have approached this phase."[3]

The available reports reveal that "It has been a number of years that University of Cambridge is presenting the Rhetoric (Science and Theology) program. In 1998, the sum of one million and one hundred thousand pounds sterling was offered to the University of Oxford to institute the chair of Science and religion. The University of Leeds in England has also instituted the first interdisciplinary center for education and research concerning the interaction between science and religion. This university instituted the Master's program of Science and Religion in 1998 and Boston University instituted the PhD program of Science, Religion, and Philosophy."[4]

The new tendency toward psychological studies in the sphere of religion which had begun in the 60's and 70's, has revealed an impressive increase in recent years to the extent that "Tens of academic journals have been published and tens of symposiums and seminars have been

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1. *Ettela'at* [newspaper], 3-4-1376/24-6-1997.

2. *Sorush* [monthly], no. 635.

3. *Keyhan* [newspaper], Safhe-ye 'Elmi ("Scientific Page"), 25-9-1370/16-12-1991 quoted from from the French Weekly *Observateur.*

4. Mahdi Golshani, Az 'Elm-e Sekular ta 'Elm-e Dini ("From Secular Science to Religious Science"), p. 59.

held in recent years and the number of the Christian Psychologists' Association has exceeded from approximately 200 in 1993 to 1600 in recent years and its researches, concerning religious studies on theoretical bases and those in the field of humanities, posted on the Internet, have been quite on the increase."[1]

Despite the fact that formerly, "Psychologists maintained that treatment of patients should be separated from judgmental issues, more than six thousand academic papers have been published on the role and importance of religion in the treatment of patients from 1987 to 1993."[2]

Furthermore, in recent years "Programs on science and religion have been presented at many American and European universities and according to the survey carried out by *New Scientist*, these programs have been on the increase more than any other academic program!"[3]

"American Political Science Association instituted its Department of Religion and Politics ten years ago and it offers a prize to the best book in this field of study every year."[4]

4. Beginning of the collapse of sheer materialism and the increasing efforts to appreciate the reality of religion

The world is experiencing the collapse of anti-God thoughts in the modern materialistic civilization and intense disillusionment with the irreligious culture. According to *Novel Observateur*: "In this era, information technology and technique have advanced astoundingly and the collapse and decline of the intellectual fundamentals of materialists and the irreligious have ever been on the increase. … It is not theology that makes use of scientific concepts, but it is science that is intensely seeking God."[5]

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1. Mahmud Golzari, *Pegah* [monthly], Tir 1380/June-July 2001.

2. 'Anwar Haqq, professor at the University of Malaysia, his lecture delivered at The First International Conference on the Role of Religion in Psychological Health, Tehran, *Pegah* [monthly], 1-3-1380/22-5-2001.

3. Mahdi Golshani, Az 'Elm-e Sekular ta 'Elm-e Dini ("From Secular Science to Religious Science"), 59.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Keyhan* [newspaper], 25-9-1370/16-12-1991.

According to a report published in *Scientific American*: "The incapacity of science in solving the problems concerning the meaning of life, and judgmental and moral issues, has made a number of formerly disbelieving scholars to distance themselves from their former beliefs and turn to religious teachings."[1]

In conformity with the worldwide religious tendency of the general public, intellectuals have also been set in motion by rectifying their academic blunders. They have revised and criticized their formerly negative views concerning religion and have perceived its place in life. Innumerable conferences have been held, many studies have been carried out, and a large number of works have been published to prove the convergence of religion and science. For instance, establishing the increasing number of associations and research institutes concerned with science and religion in Europe and the United States; holding the International Conference of the Convergence of Science and Religion in India, attended by 1100 physicists, chemists, biologists, philosophers, theologians, from all over the world; or, holding the conference concerning the relation between science and religion at the University of California, Berkeley, in which many outstanding scholars participated, need to be mentioned.[2]

"Recently the Centre for Religion and Natural Sciences in Berkeley, California, carried out a research project entitled Science and Spiritual Studies. Mark Richardson, the director of the project, said that it preceded the holding of a conference to be attended by scholars in the fields of natural sciences and religion and its objective was to alter the elite's views according to which exact sciences refuted religious beliefs."[3] Many books have been published in recent years presenting a positive view regarding the relation between science and religion. Reference may be made to *Physics and Metaphysics* (1994) by Jennifer Trusted, who has published many works in the fields of philosophy and the philosophy of science. In her book, she intends to dispel the

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1. *Keyhan* [newspaper], 5-6-1377/27-8-1998.

2. Mahdi Golshani, *Az 'Elm-e Sekular ta 'Elm-e Dini* ("From Secular Science to Religious Science"), 59.

3. *Keyhan* [newspaper], 5-6-1377/27-8-1998.

predominant belief according to which religion has impeded the way of scientific advancement. She considers the practical progress of the Middle Ages to be due to the philosophy of Religion.[1]

The world is experiencing a colossal revolution in the intellectual sphere: "According to a report published by *Time* (April 7th 1980), a silent revolution is occurring in the sphere of thought and intellect and God is returning … . According to *Newsweek* (July 20th 1998): "Science finds God."[2]

Having made reference to the said development, and the conference on studying the relation between science and religion held in California, *Scientific American* reads: "The seminal point made explicit at the conference was that scholars did not regard religion on the basis of popular beliefs, but considered it as a real world experience which was as real as scientific experiments. Apparently, many scholars are in agreement regarding the existence of God and the fact that science limps without religion and religion is sightless without science."[3]

The effect of extreme scientism and rationalism on the West, which has led to theoretical and practical deadlocks, reveals the fact that the twain instruments do not suffice to provide humanity with guidance and the claim to needlessness of religion and substituting it with science and the intellect is, theoretically and practically, doomed to failure.

5. Confessions of the 20th century standard-bearer of atheism to the existence of God

By way of putting a favorable end to the points included in this section, the intellectual developments of the standard-bearer of atheism and the English positivist philosopher of the 20th century, Antony Flew, will be mentioned. He is considered to be one of the most important claimers of the meaninglessness of religious propositions and the falsity of the proposition, "God exists," in the 20th century. His book[4] was so

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1. *Ibid.*

2. Mahdi Golshani, *Az 'Elm-e Sekular ta 'Elm-e Dini* ("From Secular Science to Religious Science"), p. 60.

3. *Keyhan* [newspaper], 5-6-1377/27-8-1998.

4. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays In Philosophical Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1955.

influential that Ninian Smart, professor of Religious Studies at University of Lancaster (1967-1988), regarded it as one of the most influential books of the century.[1]

Despite his former atheistic claims in the 20th century, Flew turned his back to his former beliefs and acknowledged the existence of God. This piece of news was regarded as significant in philosophical and religious circles, not only for the fact that one of the most outstanding atheists believed in God, (an atheist who, according to a number of scholars, had set forth the most important arguments against the existence of God within a period of 50 years), but also because his claim, particularly the argument of systematicity in his last version, was quite solid and convincing. It is significant that this was the argument which the theists' gave to prove the existence of God.[2]

Associated Press reported (9 December, 2004) that: "An English professor and philosopher who served as the standard-bearer of atheism for more that half a century, has altered his view. Based on more or less scientific arguments and evidence, he believed in the existence of God and stated this point in a video which was aired on Thursday. The 81 year old Antony Flew, following his denial of the existence of God for a number of decades, has come to the conclusion that a Supreme Being created the world. He stated the same in a telephone interview in London."

Other formerly atheist scholars who have come to the same conclusion, include: Paul Daview, Arno Penzias, Fred Hoyle, and Roger Penrose. In his book, entitled *The Symbiotic Universe*, George Greenstein, the American astronomer, acknowledged this fact. Thus Hugh Ross, the American physicist and cosmologist, ends his article: "A Supreme and Intelligent Creator created the world. The Earth is planned by an Exalted and Omniscient Creator. He planned life."

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1. Bryan Magee, *Modern British Philosophy*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1971, p. 167.

2. "Hejrat az Elhad be Khoda-bavari, *Goft-o-gu'i Jame' ba Molhed-e Pishin-e Engelisi Profosor Antoni Flu* ("Migration from atheism to believing in God, a comprehensive interview with the former English atheist Prof. Anthony Flew"), translated and reviewed by Muhammad 'Ali 'Abdullahi, *Naqd va Nazar*, no. 35-36.

The above are instances among many scholars who, despite their former atheistic views, have, at last, acknowledged the existence of God.

Based on the above, it may be said that the increasing growth of turning to religion in the West, by the general public as well as scholars, has experienced anti-religion and scientism, and the collapse of pure materialism explicitly reveals the shortcomings of scientism and rationalism.

Furthermore, the modern world faces the wave of Islamism, increasing conversions to Islam by Westerners from different walks of life, and the rise in Muslims' social and global power. The reasons lying behind conversion to Islam, as mentioned by new converts, include: widespread moral corruption; homosexuality; domestic problems; 9/11; Imam Khomeini's character; profundity and balance; logicality; pacifism; and Islam's promotion of justice.

Dissemination of Islam in the West

The modern world faces the wave of Islamism, the increasing conversion to Islam by Westerners from different walks of life, and the rise in Muslims' social and global power. A number of such instances will follow.

Acknowledging the flourishing of political Islam

The spread of religion and the socio-political rise of Islam in the modern world may serve as further evidence to reveal the limitations of scientism. In case, the increase in scientism was capable of solving human problems, Islamism would be on the decline rather than on the rise. However, even enemies acknowledge the universal influence of Islam.

According to a report regarding Islam, published in 1995 in the widely circulated newspaper, *Sydney Morning*: "Islam traverses through geographical boundaries, extends through political schools and national regimes, and different countries confront political movement and increase in the dissemination of Islam."[1]

In an article, Klaus Kinkel, the former German foreign minister, acknowledges that "Islam's dissemination is ever increasing, and presently Muslims constitute the majority in 45 countries." He adds that "The number of Muslims, approximately 30 years ago, equaled 18 percent of the world population, but presently, they constitute one fourth of the world population (1.4 billion)."[2]

According to Roget Pasquier: "Generally speaking, it is undeniable that nowadays, great religions are retreating or, at least, are preoccupied with defending themselves and endeavor to resist impediments, but Islam is making progress."[3]

The Holy Qur'an, the number one bestseller in the West

A number of reports reveal the ever increasing sale of the Holy Qur'an in the West. It has been a number of years that Dr. Muhammad Leghausen,

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1. *Omid-e Enqelab* [monthly], no. 222.

2. *Jomhuri Eslami* (newspaper), 30-11-1377/19-2-1998, citing "Eslame Hamsaye" ("Neighboring Islam"), published in *Frankfurter Algemeine.*

3. Roger du Pasquier, *Sargozasht-e Eslam va Sarnevesht-e Ensan* ("The Destiny of Islam and the Destiny of Man"), tr. 'Ali Akbar Kasma'i, p. 12.

professor at American universities, converted to Islam. He makes his presence at Iranian academic circles, and spends the summer in the United States. At the conference "Survey of conversion to Islam in America" he emphasized that following 9/11, the Holy Qur'an became the number one bestseller in the West. Alluding to the transformations in the views of many Americans and Europeans concerning the originality of Islam following 9/11, he said: "Following this catastrophe, anti-Islamic propaganda intensified and resulted in the Christian youth's conversion to Islam."[1] The words of the professor of Colgate University substantiate the unprecedented spread of the Islamic faith in the West. According to him, Islam is the second greatest religion in the West.[2]

Recitation of the Qur'an at the sessions of the European Union

Muslims in Europe have attained such a place that at the formal session of the expansion of the European Union held in Ireland, the president of the Islamic Center there, recited a number of Qur'anic verses. According to "Islamonline" website, two verses were recited concerning justice, freedom, and equality, irrespective of race or religion. In response to a question regarding the selection of the verses, Halawa, the president of the Islamic Center, said: "We would like to pronounce our message loudly and explicitly, saying that the Divine message is to call humanity to establish human values, e.g. justice and collaboration among people, despite the differences in their religious beliefs."[3]

Huntington's theory

Islam has achieved such significance in the world that Samuel Huntington, the theorist who set forth the "Clash of Civilizations," requested the West to recognize the great civilizations, e.g. the Islamic and Arab world that made progress without appropriating Western values and customs.[4] He said that the only way for the West to face Islam is to recognize it.[5] He said: "The 20th century, the age of fighting Muslims, has begun." He added that the first half of the 20th century was the era of

1. *Partow*, Monday 17 Azar 1383/8-12-2005.
2. *Resalat* [newspaper], 24-10-1382/14-1-2004.
3. *Baztab* website, 14-2-1383/4-5-2005.
4. *Bulletin*, no. 57.
5. *Khabar-e Ruz*, no. 1124.

world wars, but the second half of the century was that of cold wars. The professor at Harvard University and advisor to a number of American administrations stated that one of the reasons lying behind this event was the unrestrained growth in the population of the Muslim world![1]

Confessions of an archbishop

Lord Carey, the former archbishop of Canterbury Cathedral, in his statements concerning Islam which are in need of reconsideration, has confessed to the spectacular widespread of the Islamic faith. In his speech, delivered at the Gregorian University, Rome, he emphasized: "Islam is the epicenter of our concerns. It is a religion, a civilization, and a culture which is spreading at a fast pace all over the world. It is a civilization which has had an impressive collaboration in the family of humanity and still, has many things to present. It is a culture with a unique context absorbing millions."

Reiterating Samuel Huntington's remarks, the renowned American theorist, as reflected in the book entitled *Dialogue of Civilizations*, stated: "The fundamental problem of the West is not fundamentalism, but Islam, per se. It is a different culture whose people believe in the superiority of their culture and are preoccupied with their own inferiority in terms of power."[2]

Obligatory apologies for expressing offensive remarks against Islam

The dissemination of Islam in the West has been in a manner that, unlike former times, none of their enemies dare to employ abusive language against it and in case they do so, they have to make apologies. For instance, following the controversial remarks in which he had employed abusive language against the Prophet of Islam (ṣ), Jerry Falwell, the American Protestant evangelist and extremists, made apologies. In a declaration made in Lyncherg, Virginia, he stated: "I honestly apologize for my words in the 60 minute interview with CBS which hurt the feelings of many Muslims."[3]

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1. *Partow* [weekly], 18-6-1381/9-9-2003.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 783, p. 52, quoted from *Jomhuri Eslami*, 21-7-1381/13-10-2003.

3. *Khabar-name*, no. 783, p. 52, quoted from *Jomhuri Eslami*, 21-7-1381/13-10-2003.

Another instance was the apology made by an American General for using abusive language against Islam." The three-star General who was severely criticized by Muslims for his offensive remarks, had to apologize. General William Boykin, the U.S. foreign ministry intelligence advisor had recently termed the American led war against terrorism as the Christian war against Satan. To compensate for his blunder, he said: "I believe that terrorists are not the true followers of the Islamic faith, but they merely take advantage of Islam to attack the United States." He further said: "I apologize to all the people who found my remarks offensive."[1]

Recognition by academics and the social elite

Among the enthusiasts seeking the path to guidance, we can mention the ever increasing tendency of the cultured elite in the West. According to Martin Gleave, professor at Manchester University, dissemination of Islam in the West, particularly at universities, is on the rise. Referring to the fact that nowadays, Islam has exceeded the boundaries in the Middle East and spread in the West, he said that scholars in England had begun a widespread endeavor to comprehend the Islamic faith. This has led to the institution of Islamic studies programs at major universities in England. He added that "a number of English scholars, including Prof. Rouen, made the acquaintance of a number of Iranian politicians and scholars and was quite impressed by their thoughts. These English academics' were so impressed by the policy of the Iranian Muslim scholars that the chair of Literature from the Islamic Republic of Iran arrived in England."[2]

A number of the new converts are from the English elite, including: Jonathan Burt (Prince Burt's son) and Emma Clerk (Herbert Henry Asquith, the former British premier's granddaughter). According to *Sunday Times*, a number of renowned English landlords, iconic figures, and individuals from English wealthy families have converted to Islam. Novel studies concerning Yahya Burt (ne Jonathan Burt), son of Lord Burt, the former president of the BBC, provide first hand and reliable

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1. *Khabar-e Ruz*, Saturday 26-7-1382/18-10-2004, quoted from IRNA's (Islamic Republic of Iran News Agency) correspondent in Washington.

2. *Zamime* (" Supplement"), Thursday 6-9-1382/3-10-1424/27-11-2004, quoted from *Siyasat-e Ruz* ("Politics Today"), 3-9-1382/24-11-2004.

information concerning the Christians' conversion to Islam. Yahya says: "First and foremost, to convert to the Islamic faith, clerics are supposed to talk about it. They should also be quite capable of translating a foreign language into our language."

At the same time, we noticed that Emma Clerk, the former British premier's granddaughter had also converted to Islam. Clerk is the granddaughter of Herbert Asquith, who engaged Britain in World War I.

Telling evidence exists regarding conversion to Islam at the center of the British administration. The queen of Britain has recently arranged for the issuance of leave permits to the Muslim personnel of Buckingham Palace so that they may perform their Friday prayers at mosques.[1]

Specific countries

So far, general evidence concerning the spread of Islam in the West, irrespective of specific regions, was presented. It would be worthwhile to take a glance at a number of countries separately.

The United States of America

Muslims weekly, published in New York, reports in its latest issue that the Muslim population in America is estimated to be 6 to 7.2 million. The figure constitutes 2.5 to 3 % of the whole population, i.e. 280 million. The said figures are based on the tentative estimates of the Muslim society in the United States. These estimations also reveal that 90 % of American Muslims concentrate in 15 populous states, including California, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Michigan.

According to the unofficial statistics released in this weekly, 45 % of the Muslim population in the United States are below 15, 15 % are between 16 and 25, 30 % are between 26 and 50, and 10 % are above 51 years of age.[2]

The unprecedented spread of Islam in the United States is acknowledged by high ranking politicians. Bill Clinton, the former president of the

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1. *Baztab* website 12-1-1383/1-4-2005, 12:34:41; *Khabar-e Ruz,* Supplement, Thursday 27-1-1383/16-4-2005, quoted from *Sobh-e Sadeq*, 17-1-1383/6-4-2005; *Khabar-name* 839, p. 33.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 821, p. 46.

United States, emphasized: "From among different religions, Islam has enjoyed the utmost growth. According to Agence France-Press, at the last session of The Second American Islamic Council in Doha, Qatar, stating that Americans are supposed to have a better appreciation of Islamic beliefs, he said: "The spread of Islam in the United States has excelled other faiths at a faster pace and at the time being, the number of Muslims in the Untied States exceeds 6 million."[1]

Evidence, revealing the spread of Islam in the United States, is the unprecedented sale of the copies of the Holy Qur'an in this country. The NATO head of the press bureau declared: "The Qur'an is the number one bestseller in the United States." According to a report released by IRNA from Berlin, at a conference on the role of media and the nations' foreign policies, the former NATO spokesman of the Kosovo warfare stated: "Americans are thirsty to obtain information regarding the world, particularly Islam and Muslims." Jimmy Shima added: "The Qur'an is the number one bestseller in the United States; for and foremost, it reveals Americans' dire need to obtain further general information concerning the world surrounding them."[2]

Despite the increasing and widespread endeavors of the US Administration to restrict and repress activists, Americans increasingly welcome the Islamic faith. For instance, different circles in the American society criticized the publication of the book entitled *An Introduction to the Koran*, the availability of a course on Islamic studies and the North Carolina students' welcome to it, which ultimately resulted in the severance of the state's financial support.[3]

An Islamist torrent is sweeping American penitentiaries. According to Texan penitentiary officials, presently most of the 7500 Muslim inmates have been acquainted with the Islamic faith and have converted to it following their arrival.[4]

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1. *Vahed-e Markaii-ye Khabar* ("The Central News Unit") website, 13-1-2004; *Khabar-name*, no. 842, p. 36.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 801.

3. *Khabar-name*, no.776, p.53.

4. *Tabligh* ("Propagation"), Published by Jame'e-ye modarresin-e howze-ye 'elmiyye-ye Qom ("Qom Seminary Instructors' Association"), p. 115.

American officers and privates in Iraq

According to a report released by a Muslim researcher, concerning American forces' enthusiasm in learning the principles of the Islamic faith, a considerable number of American forces in Iraq have converted to Islam. As reported by Islam on line, Sheikh Mahmud al-Sami al-Da'i, a member of the Iraqi Muslim Researchers Association, stated: "Many Americans, referring to us to familiarize themselves with the principles of the Islamic faith and convert to Islam, acknowledge that Islam stands at sharp contrast with the media-enhanced depiction presented to them in the United States."

Reminiscing his memoirs regarding a military person's conversion to Islam, the said Muslim researcher said: "I will never forget the American new convert who felt sorry for the members of his family who had died non-Muslims.

According to the report, many male and female military forces stationed in Iraq said: "Following a close observance of Islam and Muslims, all the false propaganda concerning the Islamic faith disappeared from their mind."[1]

According to Fars News Agency, reporting al-Jazira news website, the US military personnel are ranked among the customers at the largest book market, located on al-Mutanabbi Avenue in Baghdad, and constitute the most supportive readership of the English versions of the Holy Qur'an.[2]

As a consequence of their deployment in Iraq, a number of the U.S. military officers, despite leading the war against Muslims, have been acquainted with the Islamic faith and have converted to it. For instance, according to a report released by the official Saudi Arabian news agency, following his acquaintance with the Islamic faith, an American military officer converted to Islam at a personal status court in Baghdad and said: "Following thorough inquiries, I converted to the Islamic faith." At the

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1. *Khabar-name*, no. 821, p. 48.

2. *Khabar-name*, supplement, Thursday 3-2-1383/23-4-2005 apud *19 Dey* ("19 Dey [the tenth month in the Iranian calendar]") [newspaper], 25-1-1383/14-4-2005; *Khabar-name*, no. 839, p. 32. This piece of news is also quoted from the Iranian Qur'anic News Agency website.

same time, making reference to a considerable number of the U.S. military forces' conversion to Islam, Sheikh Mahmud al-Sami al-Da'i, a member of the Iraqi Muslim Scholars' Association, said: "Following their close acquaintance with Islamic teachings, the American military forces perceived that Islamic teachings were totally different from the enhanced picture depicted by the Western media, and as a consequence, welcomed the Islamic faith ebulliently."[1]

An American female private at Imam Husayn's holy shrine

Last week, impressed by the Muslim spiritual atmosphere in Iraq, an American female private visited Imam Husayn's ('a) holy shrine to ask for a favor. Holding a green flag in her hand, she entered the shrine in civilian clothes, clutched the metal grid of the domed sepulcher and cried: "Baby, baby."

The surprised pilgrims circled around her and inquired about her presence and cries. She replied: "During my stay in Karbala as an American private, I observed many times that women visited these saints holding a green flag in their hands to request their intercession on their behalf, so that God Almighty may, thanks to the blessings bestowed upon the buried saints in these sepulchers, grant them favors. Therefore, I held a green flag in my hand to ask God to grant me a son after years of childlessness and sterility. The end of the report reads that the American woman promised herself that if God granted her a son, she would call him Husayn, would convert to Islam and proclaim the same."[2]

Latin America

Light News Islamic News Agency reported that the tendency toward Islam in Argentina and other Latin American countries is on the rise. The increasing tendency in Argentina is such that from among public and private schools, there is only one primary school in which Islamic principles and Arabic language are taught. Presently, the Muslim population in Argentina amounts to one million, though they suffer from shortcomings in terms of active Muslim organizations and institutions. For instance, 400 Muslim families, living in the region close to Fofoy

1. *Khabar-name*, no. 819, p. 27.
2. *Khabar-name*, no. 836, p. 29.

frontiers, are even deprived of a mosque, a cleric or a book on Islam.[1]

Canada

According to the *Muslim* website, Islam is the most widespread religion in Canada and the United States. Reporting American Council for Islamic Relations and the Canadian Statistics Bureau, the source declares that the Muslim population in Canada enjoys a 128.9 % increase between 1991 and 2001. According to this website, presently the number of Muslims in Canada has surprisingly reached 579,640.

Muslims adds that with such rise, Islam has turned into the most widespread religion in Canada. On the basis of this report, the increase in the number of Muslims in Canada has been in a fashion that, for the first time, the number of Muslims in Canada has exceeded that of Jews in this country. However, the statistics released by Canadian Statistics Bureau in 1991 indicates that the Jewish population in this country exceeds that of Muslims by 25%.[2]

1. *Khabar-name*, no. 806, p. 47.

2. Supplement to *Khabar-name*, Thursday 20 9-1382/11-12-2003; *Sobh-e Sadeq*, 10-9-1382/1-12-2003.

According to the statistics released by the Canadian government in 2001, the Jewish population residing in Canada enjoyed a 3.7 % growth and has reached 329,995, whereas the growth rate of the Muslim population was 128.9 %. At the time being, Muslims constitute 2 % of the Canadian population. It is to be noted that Jews merely constitute 1.1 percent of the Canadian population.[1]

Based on the latest statistics released by the Canadian government, the number of Muslims in the last decade of the 20th century exceeded 9 %, amounting to 579,000 which made the Muslim population to rise 2 % of the total population in this country and turned Islam into the most widespread religion in Canada.[2]

England

Fourteen thousand English citizens have converted to the Islamic faith. Statistics indicate that, so far, 142,000 people from among the English white population have converted to Islam.[3] According to a study conducted by *Sunday Times*, new evidence indicates that Islam was welcomed by the general public, a number of whom were acquainted with Islam and converted to it. Christian Baker, a former friend of 'Imran Khan, claims that he was acquainted with Islam through his friend, but converted to it following their separation. He says: "'Imran sowed the seeds of this transformation, but when our friendship came to an end, the religion per se motivated me to move."[4]

The dissemination of Islam in England is such that Muslims have also been more determined in their religious beliefs and have participated more seriously in devotional acts at mosques. According to a report released by *Sunday Times*: "The number of Muslims who visit mosques in England has, for the first time, exceeded that of Christians who go to churches to perform their services. Based on the statistics, every week, 930,000 Muslims go to mosques, but the number of Christians visiting

1. *Khabar-name*, no. 822, p. 28.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 821, p. 42.

3. *Baztab* 12-1-1383/1-4-2005; *Khabar-e Ruz*, supplement, Thurday 27-1-1383/16-4-2005, quoted from *Sobh-e Sadeq*, 17-1-1383/6-4-2005; *Khabar-name,* no. 839, p. 33.

4. *Ibid.*

churches amounts to 916,000.[1]

Britain

According to *Mail on Sunday*, the widely circulated English weekly, Islam is transforming into Britain's official religion.[2] The weekly warns: "Christianity has disappointed Britons in such a fashion that if the present trend continues, the ecclesiastical chimes and choruses shall fall silent in future, since there is no enthusiasm to attend such religious groups, nor shall they find any audience. Consequently, churches shall fade away or shall practically turn into private clubs for a limited audience. Furthermore, the right wing English periodical suggests preventing the construction of mosques and other Islamic centers in England: "A colossal and magnificent Islamic center is under construction in Oxford which is one of the most sacred Christian cities in England." It is further suggested: "How would Muslims react if the English considered constructing a Christian center in Qom, Isfahan or Najaf?"[3]

Denmark

According to a report released by Danish International Radio, three to five thousand Danes converted to the Islamic faith in the last decade, but a considerable number of converts have not been included in the statistics.[4]

According to a Danish newspaper, the number of the Danes converting to Islam, the majority of whom are young, is on the increase. The newly converted youth constitute one third of the Danish Muslim converts. Young women form the majority of the converts.[5]

Germany

Referring to the results of a survey conducted in Germany, Amina Demiobucken, from the German Christian Democratic Party, states that there are more than 3,000,000 Muslims in Germany. They constitute the

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1. Khabar-name, no. 840, p. 39.

2. *Zamime* ("Supplement"), Thursday 6-9-1382/27-11-2002.

3. *Zamime* ("Supplement"), Thursday 6-9-1382/27-11-2002, quoted from *Sharq*, 26-8-1382/17-11-2002.

4. *Khabar-name*, no. 848, p. 45.

5. *Tabligh* ("Propagation"), Published by Jame'e-ye modarresin-e howze-ye 'elmiyye-ye Qom ("Qom Seminary Instructors' Association"), p. 105.

third largest religious society in Germany and have attracted the attention of the media as well as the general public. The growth rate of the Muslim population has resulted in the optimism of the general public toward Muslims.

The results of a survey carried out by Konrad Adenauer Institute regarding the viewpoint of the general public toward Muslims reveals that Germans hold in esteem the Muslim population in Germany more than the followers of any other religion. Two thirds of the German respondents emphasized that Muslims are supposed to be able to practice their religion without any restrictions. According to the survey, 69 % of the respondents have rejected the superiority of Christianity over Islam and 46 % of them oppose the view that Islam and Christianity represent the same values.[1]

The widespread of the German Muslim minority has produced special self confidence in them and has directed them towards the preservation and reinforcement of their children's religious identity. For instance, Muslim children's games have found currency at markets and Muslim settlements in Germany and a number of other European countries. "Bride" is one of these games, in which a child plays the role of a bride, wearing a dress called "Rosan" in a dignified manner with Muslim veil, accompanied by a prayer mat and a Persian rug. Pictures of the Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions in the Arabic script, handicrafts from Muslim countries, educational books, stories, music albums and CDs containing Malaysian Islamic hymns are available for sale on Muslim markets. CDs on the history of Islam, the prophetic traditions, The Holy Qur'an, books on Islamic topics, toothbrushes, perfumes and such items can be found at these places. The name of the Prophet of Islam (ṣ) and Ayat al-Kursi (The Qur'an 2: 255) are inscribed on house portals.[2]

France

Following the sacrilege to the Prophet of Islam (ṣ), the sale of translations of the Qur'an in France indicates a surprising 38 % increase. As a result, approximately 60,000 copies of the Holy Book have been

1. *Khabar-name*, no. 817, p. 32.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 831, p. 42.

purchased.[1]

Sweden

Based on a report released by the Swedish newspaper, *Metro*: "Despite the heightening conflicts between Western capitalist regimes and Islamists, the Swedes' enthusiasm toward Islam is on the rise.

Quoting a professor of history of religions, the newspaper report reads: "The number of Swedish converts to the Islamic faith used to be less than fifty, but nowadays, the number is estimated to be two to five thousand, most of whom embraced Islam recently."

Metro adds that the majority of the Swedish new converts to Islam were acquainted with the Islamic faith by associating with the Muslims residing in Sweden, and consequently converted to Islam.[2]

Hindus

According to an official at the Penther Association in Tamil Nadu, 1,000 Indian Hindus converted to the Islamic faith. Based on a report released by the central news unit, the said official stated that they were from Harijan families and lowly Hindu casts. They will declare their conversion on 15 January next year.[3]

Renaissance in Muslim countries

Not only does the Islamist wave indicate a new acceleration in the West, but the Muslims in Islamic countries are demanding an increasing renaissance in their Muslim life. For instance, Islamic schools in Turkey encountered an increase in the general public's welcome at the outset of the educational year 2003-2004 that enrolments at these schools have increased by 70 %. The president of Turkish Islamic Schools Association reported that 35,000 students registered in Islamic schools in that educational year.

According to Agence France-Press, the welcoming trend started after a recession period, since in 1997, the secular army in Turkey deposed the

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1. *Tabligh* ("Propagation"), Published by Jame'e-ye modarresin-e howze-ye 'elmiyye-ye Qom ("Qom Seminary Instructors' Association"), p. 114-115.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 801.

3. *Ya-'l-tharat al-Husayn* weekly, 3-10-1382/24-12-2004.

first Islamist regime led by Erbakan, the then prime minister.[1] Similar movements are noticeable in the Islamist wave in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

Reasons for converting to Islam as stated by new converts

The impact of Imam Khomeini's character

A number of the new converts have opted for the Islamic faith as a consequence of their acquaintance with Imam Khomeini. Expressing one of reasons for his conversion to the Islamic faith, Diego Redard, an American Muslim youth, said: "Reading a book by Imam Khomeini led to my conversion to the Islamic faith." He selected the name 'Ali Akbar and welcomed Islam five months after 9/11. He is 23 years of age, studies liberal arts at State University of New York, Stony Brook, New York. He has embraced the Shiite Islam.[2]

Spread of moral evils, homosexuality, and domestic problems

The said young Muslim convert, Diego Redard, mentioned permissive life and homosexuality in the United States and the domestic problems arising from the corrupt belief system as factors which led him to convert to the Islamic faith. He said: "The prevalent irreligious life in the United states falls short of solving the problems. This irresponsible way of life tolerates homosexuality; in such a belief system, families suffer from various problems, and I could not accept this belief system."[3]

An editorial published in its latest issue, *Mail on Sunday*, asks whether Islam will turn into Britain's official religion and warns: "Yes, in case the existing cultural, social, and religious chaos continues, one should expect such a day." Making reference to the transformation of Muslims residing in Britain and the enthusiasm shown by a large number of Britons to learn the Qur'an and their regular attendance at mosques, the editor emphasizes: "The trend of tendency toward Islam is rapidly on the increase nowadays due to the British society's entanglement in sexual problems, alcoholism, family break-ups, and the perplexing use of

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1. *Khabar-name*, no. 835, p. 30.

2. *Khabar-e Ruz,* supplement, Thursday, 16-11-1382/5-2-2004, quoting *E'temad*, 18-12-1382/9-3-2004.

3. *Ibid.*

narcotics." The weekly warns: "Considering the widespread use of alcohol among the youth, diffusion of narcotic tablets and cocaine, spread of hooliganism, and normalization of pregnancy among 12 year old girls in Britain, Islam will take advantage of such chaotic circumstances to spread in the present and in future."[1]

The first serious study concerning the conversion of the British prominent figures to Islam conducted by *Sunday Times* (22 February), revealed that a number of the most famous British Lords, iconic figures, and people from British families of substance converted to Islam due to their disillusionment with Western values.[2]

The 9/11 catastrophe

One of the factors leading to the rise in the number of Muslims throughout the world, particularly in the United States, was the 9/11 disaster. As a result, a large number of Westerners were attracted by Islam and endeavored to know it. Such acquaintance showed them the truth, aroused their latent nature and led them to embrace Islam.

Concerning this issue, Dr. Ahmad Hanif, the American Muslim convert says: "The American strategy following 9/11 was to enfeeble Muslims in the world which led to the American general public's further acquaintance with Islam." In his speech delivered at Azad University in Tabriz, he further said: "Following this catastrophe, the Qur'an turned into one of the bestsellers in the United States and a large number of people turned to Islam." He added: "The spread of Islam is noticeable in America and Africa, where anti-Islam struggles predominate."[3]

Islam's deliberation, moderation and logicality

Yahya Burt (ne Jonathan Burt), son of Lord Burt, the former president of BBC says: "The pictures of Islam as depicted by Islamic political movements are not appealing. However, what encouraged me to convert to the Islamic faith were the deliberation, moderation, and logicality

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1. *Sharq*, 26-8-1383/19-11-2005.

2. *Baztab* [website], 12-1-1383/1-4-2005, 12:34:41; *Khabar-e Ruz*, supplement, Thursday 27-1-1383/16-4-2002, quoted from *Sobh-e Sadeq*, 17-1-1383/6-4-2005; *Khabar-name*, no. 839, p. 33.

3. *Khabar-name*, no. 812, p. 55.

noticeable in this religion and the Muslim way of life."[1]

Islam's pacifism and promotion of justice

In a meeting with the director of the Islamic Culture and Communications Organization, 45 Japanese tourists on their tourist-cultural trip to the Islamic Republic of Iran, pronounced the formula of conversion to the Islamic faith. They were from the Umoto group, aiming at the establishment of peace and justice in the world. On the basis of a report released by the organization, owing to Islam's pacifism and promotion of justice, the members of the group familiarized themselves with the Islamic faith and became interested in embracing it.[2]

1. *Baztab* [website], 12-1-1383/1-4-2005, 12:34:41; *Khabar-e Ruz*, supplement, Thursday 27-1-1383/16-4-2002, quoted from Sobh-e Sadeq, 17-1-1383/6-4-2005; *Khabar-name*, no. 839, p. 33.

2. *Khabar-name*, no. 786, p. 47, quoted from *Qods* [periodical], 15-8-1381/6-11-2000.

Creating physical and psychological comfort in individuals, and esprit and vitality in society

A collection containing the opinions and ideas of a number of Spanish Muslim converts, entitled *Today They Converted to Islam in Seville,* was translated from Spanish into French and published with an introduction by Michel d'Appalenna, the French professor of Oriental Studies. The introduction includes a survey of the different manners of conversion from Christianity to Islam in the Spanish society from the 5th century to the present. The book includes the views of Vecinte Mansur, the Spanish Muslim new convert. He claims that he abandoned "distorted" Christianity, since it was a religion of pain, suffering, complexes, and sin; besides, it ignored the body and physical existence. In contrast, in Islam, man is liberated from the Christian God, relates to God, the force making life meaningful, regards as permissible the pleasures of the body and the soul, and with its instructions, paves the way for the establishment of a lively and spirited society. [1]

Religion for life and solution to all the problems

Mrs. Yasmina, a Spanish Muslim convert who recently converted from Christianity, talked of her intellectual development, saying that she had found all the answers to her questions and considered the Islamic faith as a practical guide in her life. By embracing Islam, she personally and completely regarded herself committed to God and, based on her free will, revealed this commitment by accepting and observing the Islamic dress code.[2]

1. *Partow-e Sokhan*, no. 226, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*

SUMMARY

The necessity of religion, as presented in the above discussion, arises from the psychological, intellectual, individual, and social necessities in this world and the world to come.

Western scholars often express recourse to religion in psychological and sociological terms. Considering the specific functions of religion for man, they regard such recourse as necessary. Muslim thinkers often prove the necessity of religion through emphasis on its epistemic function and consider religion as a complement to man's epistemic shortcomings, although, more or less, they make mention of the non-epistemic functions of religion.

The necessity of taking recourse to religion in the above discussion is closely connected with "the necessity of the prophets' Divine mission as discussed by Muslim scholars, since the most significant intellect for the necessity of the prophetic mission, as mentioned in their arguments, is a kind of defect inherent in man's epistemic means, necessitating recourse to a more complete means. Therefore, the need for Divine revelation and its necessity presupposes the necessity of a Divine mission and precedes it.

Contrary to Ash'arite theologians, Shiite and Mu'tazilite theologians prove the necessity of sending down Divine revelation through the law of intellectual good and evil as well as the law of Divine Grace. Mystics consider Divine revelation to be necessary, as a prerequisite, for knowing God and treading the path toward Him.

One of the arguments presented for the necessity of the prophets' Divine revelation is known as "the philosophers' argument." It emphasizes man's social nature, the society's need for laws, and man's incapacity to legislate laws and enforce them. It is dealt with by philosophers and scholars such as Farabi, Avicenna, and 'Allameh Tabataba'i.

Evidence may be found in the philosophers' works revealing the necessity of imparting Divine revelation for a need lying beyond mundane matters and social laws. They are in pursuit of laws which may guide man toward his own perfection as well as his happiness in this

world and the world to come.

A number of thinkers have expounded the necessity of sending down Divine revelation on the basis of man's need to perceive the path toward perfection.

The two mentioned arguments fall short of proving the necessity of sending down the Qur'anic guiding verses, but they are restricted to what lies beyond human perception and the intellect. Furthermore, the twain arguments take the shortcomings of human epistemic means on the way to perfection as the center of gravity, but apparently, besides the epistemic aspect, what necessitates sending down Divine revelation is to provide man with the true incentive to proceed toward guidance.

Apparently, in addition to placing emphasis on man's epistemic shortcomings, it is necessary to emphasis his psychological defects, possession of contradictory desires, and the role of sending down Divine revelation in motivating man toward guidance.

Two further arguments revealing the necessity of recourse to Divine revelation are: the intellectual necessity to avoid incurring contingent losses and the intellectual necessity to submit to true propositions.

A number of people, including Dr. Soroush, emphasize the sufficiency of scientific advancement and man's intellectual development as arguments substantiating needlessness of Divine revelation.

Emphasizing three further arguments (prophets' success, presentation of a specific standard for needlessness, and citation of the Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions) he endeavors to support his claim, but none of them is acceptable.

A glance at a number of consequences of extreme scientism and the Western materialistic intellect discloses the shortcomings of science and the intellect on the path toward guidance. Finding the two means adequate led to destructive consequences in modern societies and called upon scholars to revise the materialistic thoughts predominant in the West. Such revisions resulted in theoretical deadlocks and practical crises. In terms of theorization, the modern world has confronted the deadlocks of science and the purely materialistic intellect, and in the sphere of practice, it has encountered and experienced a large number of social problems arising from the same attitude.

A number of the evil consequences of contentment with science and the intellect include: nihilism, anxiety and loneliness; mental fatigue and the

feeling of spiritual and moral emptiness; metamorphosis of man into a machine; increase in criminal acts; incapacity to solve the complications of modern man.

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